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Magna Charta Stories

World-Famous Struggles for Freedom
in Former Times

RECOUNTED FOR YOUTHFUL READERS

EDITED BY

ARTHUR GILMAN, A.M.

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PREFACE

The tales of heroism recounted in this volume are presented to their readers with the intention of showing to a certain extent the persistence with which the idea of Freedom has been pursued through the centuries, from the mythical age of Horatius to the time of King John of England. It has not been the endeavour to give a history of Freedom, but merely to present some of the notable instances in the world's history, in which men have made their lives memorable by resisting oppression and breaking the bonds of the oppressor.

The fact that a number of authors have laboured together under the general supervision of the Editor, gives the book the advantage of presenting its subject in a variety of lights. Each writer has endeavoured to use a lively style, and to adhere closely to historical truth. A list of authorities has generally been added, in order that the readers may pursue the subject further, as it is hoped many of them will wish to do.

If the stories stimulate a love of history and add to the inspiration of freedom which should be the heritage of every English boy and girl, the aims of the writers and of the Editor will be met.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE GREAT PAPER	11
By Harriet D. Slidell M'Kenzie	
II. HORATIUS AT THE BRIDGE	25
By Amanda B. Harris	
III. A SUCCESSFUL SECESSION	37
By Mary Blake	
IV. MILTIADES AT MARATHON	51
By the Editor	
V. TWO IMMORTAL NAMES	63
By Lizzie W. Champney	
VI. AT THE TOE OF THE BIG BOOT	82
By Susan Coolidge	
VII. THE TRIUMPH OF AN IDEA	98
By Mrs. M. E. W. Sherwood	
VIII. THE HAMMER OF THE GENTILES	114
By Anna Laurens Dawes	
IX. IN THE GERMAN WOODS LONG AGO	129
By the Editor	
X. THE BARBARIAN'S OVERTHROW	143
By Mrs. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop	
XI. THE HAMMER OF THE SARACENS	154
By Mrs. M. H. Catherwood	
XII. OUT OF THE DARK	165
By the Editor	

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
KING ALFRED ALLOWS THE CAKES TO BURN <i>Frontispiece.</i>	169
EPHALTES DISCOVERS THE SECRET PATH AT TIER-MOPYLÆ	74
CHARLES MARTEL RECOGNIZES COUNT CEDRIC	162

MAGNA CHARTA STORIES.

I.—THE GREAT PAPER.



MANY pieces of old paper are worth their weight in gold. I will tell you of one that you

could not buy for even so high a price as that. It is now in the British Museum, in London. It is old and worn. It is more than six hundred and sixty-nine years old.

It is not easy to realize how old that is. Kings have been born and died, nations have grown up and have wasted away, during that long time. There was no America (so far as the people who lived at that time knew) when this old paper was written upon. America

was not discovered for nearly three hundred years after it. A king wrote his name on this old paper, and though he had written his name on many other pieces of paper, and they are lost, this one was very carefully kept from harm, though once it fell into the hands of a tailor, who was about to cut it up for patterns, and at another time it was almost destroyed by fire.

Visitors go to look at it with great interest. They find it a shrivelled piece of paper, with the king's name and the great seal of England on it; but they know that it stands for English liberty, and means that — as the poet Thomson wrote, in the song "Rule, Britannia" — "Britons never shall be slaves." It is called the "Magna Charta," which means simply the "Great Paper." There have been other great papers, and other papers that have been called "charters," but this one is known the world over as the "Great Paper."

As you look back into English history, you will see that all the way along our ancestors have been striving with their might to be free. They were willing to have kings, but they wished to have them reasonable and not tyrannical. They had always to be on

the watch; for every once in a while a king would arise who would try to take away some right or privilege which they had gained. This was the case after Edward the Confessor, as he is called, had abolished a heavy tax called the Danegelt, and given them mild laws. When the conquering Norman, William, came to oppress the English, he revived the hated tax, but they got it repealed again by his grandson Stephen. Stephen's uncle, Henry I., who had been king before him, left him a good example in some respects. Although he had exacted heavy taxes, Henry was wise enough to know that the real English, those who formed the strength of the kingdom, were of Saxon blood, and had inherited a love of liberty from their fathers and mothers, and that if he had peace with them he must give them good laws. He re-established those good laws of Edward the Confessor, by a charter, and did other praiseworthy acts, though he was far from what you would call a good king. Henry had men who were accused of crimes tried in a sensible way, instead of by the "ordeal," as it was customary to do before. One of the modes of trial by "ordeal" was to put the prisoner into the

water, and if he floated, he was considered innocent, but if he drowned, he was thought to have been guilty! Now, I am sure that if I had to be tried in that way, I should think it very hard, for it would make me out guilty the first time, and there would be no chance for another trial. I have no doubt that the "ordeal" removed many bad men from England, but I fear it took some good ones too. When Henry died, in 1135, "there was tribulation in the land, for every man that could, then robbed another."

King John stands out among the sovereigns of England as one of the very worst. He was a great-grandson of Henry I. Like his great-grandfather, he granted the people a charter; but, as you shall see, he did not do it until he was forced to, while Henry had done it because he was wise enough to see that it would be well with him to do it. In his own time, it was said that "hell itself would be defiled by the presence of John," and it really would be hard to defend him against this judgment. He was a bad son, and rebelled against his father, though his favorite child. He murdered his nephew, Arthur of Brittany, striking him down with his own hands, and

then pushing him headlong into the river Scine ; and he was one of those who betrayed his brother Richard into a long imprisonment in Germany.

As a king he was no better. From the beginning to the end of his reign he was false and cruel, and no one, not even the highest and noblest, was safe from fines and taxes of the most tyrannical kind. Their only hope was in giving bribes to the sovereign, who, you know, should have been their protector and not their tormentor. There is no country in Europe in which the people are now treated in this way, except Russia. One man actually was forced to pay for the privilege of eating his breakfast !

Geoffrey Fitzpiers, one of the highest officers in the land, heard the king say, "That man watches me lest I should get some of his goods ; but so much the more pains do I take to gain them." Fitzpiers said, but not to the king, "Since he is set on my wealth, he will surely get it, but I will raise such a storm as he shall feel for many a day." Sure enough, the king followed his remark by taking ten thousand marks from Fitzpiers ; and this led to the "Magna Charta," and I will tell you how.

The great barons of England were many of them furious because they were treated in this way by the king, and Fitzpiers joined them in making a league by which they bound themselves to force the king to give them their rights again. They waited until 1214. In that year, John called upon them to follow him to France to fight against the French king. They started, but left him at a certain point in the journey, saying that the terms of their allegiance to him did not compel them to serve him more than forty days. John thought that he would conquer the French first and then go home and subdue the rebellious barons ; but he made a wrong reckoning. He was beaten by the French king, Philip II., at the battle of Bouvines, in 1214, and he was glad to escape with his life. It was one of the greatest battles of the time. Hurrying home to punish the barons, John heard that his old enemy Fitzpiers was dead, and he said, "It is well ; he has gone to shake hands in hell with our primate Hubert. Now I am truly king !" He meant Hubert Walter, who had been Archbishop of Canterbury, and had died in 1205. In this John was wrong again, for the barons did not suffer from lack

of leaders. They had with them Robert Fitzwalter, who was known as "the Marshal of God and Holy Church," and Stephen Langton, who had been appointed by the Pope, Archbishop of Canterbury in the place of Hubert.

Langton had already taken up the part of the liberties of the people, by warning the king against his arbitrary course; but John had told him, "Mind your Church, and leave me to govern the State." This had not restrained Langton, and he had pledged his support to the establishment of the charter of Henry I. as the law of the land. This was a modification of that of Edward the Confessor, and combined the old Saxon laws with certain changes that had been made by the Normans. The barons had proclaimed this as the law of the land in 1213, after a council which they had held at St. Albans. Now they solemnly vowed to conquer or die. There was little need of their vowing this, for they all knew that if they did not conquer, the king would see that they died.

After the battle of Bouvines, John returned to England, as I have said. It was towards the end of October; and about the middle of the next month
(1212) 2

Langton called the barons together again, this time at Bury St. Edmunds, and they knelt at the altar of their old Saxon saint to swear anew to force the king to deal justly with the people. They all had private wrongs that needed redress, as well as the public grievances, for John had treated them and their wives and daughters in a way so shameful that I cannot even tell you of it. When you are older you will read in big histories all about the bad deeds of wicked kings, if you think that it is worth while.

When John heard what the barons had sworn to do, he fled to London and shut himself up in a place that he thought safe. The barons had drawn up a charter, and they followed him to London to show it to him. It was the sixth of January, and he thought it would be safe to say that he would grant the charter at Easter, for he felt sure that he could raise an army in the mean while large enough to beat Langton and all the barons.

When Easter arrived, the barons met at Stamford. There were two thousand knights, followed by their esquires. I should like to have seen them as they rode about, their armor glistening in the spring sun,

their banners flying, and their chargers neighing as they sniffed the air, which must have seemed to be filled with the stimulus of freedom! They had the charter with them, and John, who was at Oxford, sent to see what it was like. When he found out its terms, he was wild with fury, and sent word that he would never sign a paper that would make him a slave. He thought that the king should be able to do what he pleased, and that the people had no rights that he was bound to respect.

John's answer roused the whole country, and the wretched king found himself powerless before the anger of the nation that he had wronged. He had been so wrathful that he had even issued a proclamation calling upon all who supported him to "reproach" all who held with the barons, by pointing their fingers at them, I suppose, and calling them names. He was powerless, however, and he said once more that he would sign the hated paper, though he did not speak of it in this way. He said instead, that he was ready and willing to grant the demands of his "loving subjects" whenever they should appoint the time and place. They appointed the fifteenth of

June as the time, and the Meadow of Council, or Runnymede, as the place.

"In this Council Meadow," says Charles Knight, "king and earl had often met in solemn witan before the Norman had planted his foot on the island. A great mixed race had preserved the old traditions of individual liberty which belonged to the days before the conquest." These, he adds "would, practically, be the inheritance of generation after generation."

To this meadow, consecrated to freedom by ancient associations, which lies off the Thames below Windsor, came John with a small train of twenty-four bishops and nobles in their armor and robes. Of this small number there were but two who really wished success to the king. The others were heart and soul on the side of the barons.

The king encamped on the left bank of the river, and men from each of the contracting parties met on a little island between the hosts. It was not a time for discussion, for the only arguments that would avail on either side were power and force, and the king had already given way to them. The king almost immediately took his pen and wrote his name

on the charter, and said, as his great-grandfather had said, that he did it on account of his pious regard for God, and his desire to benefit his people, though we know that he did not entertain any very pious motives at the time.

The Magna Charta was, as some one has said, the first great public act of the nation after it had realized that it was a nation, — the completion of a work for which they had been laboring for a hundred years. It has been the foundation of English constitutional liberty ever since. You will learn, as you read history more, that it grew out of another great struggle among the forests of Germany. Let us see what it amounts to.

It begins by saying that the king grants these rights to his subjects “for the health of his soul,” which means, to save himself from losing his kingdom. The charter then proclaims the liberty of the church and the liberty of the people.

“No freeman,” it says, “shall be seized, or imprisoned, or outlawed, or in any way brought to ruin; we will not go against any man, nor send against him, save by legal judgment of his peers.

“To no man will we sell, or deny, or delay right or justice.

“No scutage or aid — taxes — shall be imposed in our realm save by the Common Council.”

Judges' courts were to be held at certain fixed times. Even the women were thought of, and the king was no longer allowed to make rich widows marry his friends, so that he might get some of their money. But the best thing in the Magna Charta was that it protected the poor. It was declared that no man whose goods were forfeited should lose his means of making a living. The freeman was to keep his "con-tenement," or tools, the merchant his merchandise, and the villain, or serf, his "wainage"—his oxen, plough and wagon. Foreign merchants might travel in England, and sell and buy as they pleased; and the towns were to have and use "all their liberties and free customs."

So a council of twenty-four nobles was then chosen to watch this king whom no man could trust, and to make war upon him if he broke his compact.

After the charter was signed and sealed, it was published throughout England, and sworn to at every town-mote. The barons rejoiced, and Robert Fitz-walter wrote letters calling upon the knights of England to come with arms and horses to a great tournament, at which the prize was to be a large she-bear.

King John had laughed and joked while he signed the paper; but as soon as he was safely back in Windsor Castle, he gave vent to his rage. "They have given me twenty-four over-kings!" he cried, as he rolled on the floor, swearing, and biting straws and sticks like a wild animal.

During the rest of his life, only little more than a year, he tried in vain, by the help of the Pope's curse and by foreign soldiers' swords, to escape from these "over-kings," who would not suffer him to go back to his old habits of forcing money from Jews by pulling their teeth, carrying off and poisoning young girls, starving women and children, and crushing old priests under copes of lead. It was in a last attempt against his people's freedom that he saw his baggage, with the royal treasure, his crown, and the provision for his army, all swept away by a sudden rising of the tide.

A few days later he died in Newark, saying, "I commit my body to St. Wulstan and my soul to God," — the God whose laws he had rebelled against for so many years.

His son, Henry III., was crowned soon afterwards,

and immediately made to swear to maintain Magna Charta, which was from that time the foundation of English law.

Thus was accomplished the great work of the English barons of the twelfth century. They had asked for nothing more than justice, and they were to be contented with nothing less. And in forcing this justice from their kings they had acted in the spirit of that advice which we have all read in "Tom Brown at Rugby:"

"As to fighting, keep out of it if you can, by all means.

"If you do fight, fight it out; and don't give in while you can stand and see."

Those who wish to read more about King John will find one phase of his character displayed in Shakespeare's play bearing his name ; and the following list of histories will help them further : Dickens's "A Child's History of England," chapter xiv. Green's "Short History of the English People," chapter iii. Green's "Larger History," book iii., chapter i. Knight's "Popular History of England," chapter xxiii. Hume's "History of England," chapter xi. Hallam's "View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages," chapter viii., part 2. Stubbs's "Constitutional History of England," chapter xii. These are given in the order in which it will be found most profitable to read them.

II.—HORATIUS AT THE BRIDGE.

IT was a long, long time ago that the one-eyed Horatius did the wonderful thing for which his name has come down to us. He was a young Roman soldier; and the story is more than two thousand years old.

But brave deeds have a kind of immortal freshness about them. They are never left to die. Somebody is sure to pass them on and on by word of mouth, and they become tradition; or somebody writes down the events, and they become history.

First about Horatius Cocles' eye. *Cocles* means “born with one eye, or that hath but one.” There are two stories told: One is that Horatius was born with such a singular formation of face, having a nose so flat that both his eyebrows and his eyes seemed to meet and join together, that to appearance he had

but one eye. The other is that he lost an eye in the wars.

I shall always believe the last account — that so brave a youth had the beauty of his face spoiled by one of those piercing missiles which the soldiers of that time used in battle ; for he had been a fighter from the day he was old enough to enter his country's service.

It was a custom of the Romans to give a man a surname on account of something he had done, or from some peculiarity about his person or character. And the common people did just as their class do now — they applied what we should think a nickname ; and then, as now, the owner was apt to be best known by it. No doubt those who were acquainted with Horatius meant to call him Cyclops, after the giants who had one eye in the centre of the forehead ; but in some unaccountable way they made it Cocles instead. So Horatius *Cocles* he became ; and, as Plutarch says, “the name remained with him.”

In all the two hundred and forty-six years of its history the liberty of the people of Rome had

never been in such peril. They had dethroned their king and banished him ; and the struggle was great to keep him from coming back, and to keep out the armies of the neighboring sovereigns whom he had bribed or flattered to help him.

This man, Tarquinus Superbus, or “the Proud,” was the seventh and last king of Rome ; and also the worst one. And his wife, Tullia, and his son, Sextus, were as bad as he was. He never had a right to the throne at all, but had come into power by a crime which shocked all his people and made him odious from the first. He and his wife had the late king, who was her own father, put to death. He then made haste to have himself proclaimed sovereign in the public square ; the bleeding body of the dead old man was thrown into the street, and Tullia, who was such a monster of wickedness in womanly shape that Lady Macbeth seems almost endurable in comparison, drove over it where it lay, though her horror-stricken charioteer desired to turn back.

Such was the coming into the kingdom of the last Tarquin. And still this man, who kept no faith with

anybody, who was guilty of the most outrageous acts of injustice, was suffered to tyrannize over the Roman people for five and twenty years.

At last it was a wrong done to a private citizen which brought about the revolution. The shameful treatment of a noble Roman woman, of which the king's son Sextus was guilty, roused such indignation that the whole Tarquin race was driven out of Rome.

The story of Lucretia spread like wild-fire. And when her husband and friends brought her dead body out into the market-place that all might look at her, such cries of horror and execration arose as had never been heard there before. The populace gathered from every street and by-way, furious beyond control. They hissed the name of Tarquin. They denounced him and howled for revenge. They swore that the family should be rooted out.

The patricians, both men and women, standing by, sorrowful and appalled, approved when they heard the terrible cry : “ Down with the tyrants ! down with the Tarquins ! ” With the lower class there was the noisy fury of a mob ; the nobles were more quiet

in their demonstrations, but the pale mute faces meant doom from which there would be no appeal. And when Brutus stood up and swore, “ I will pursue Tarquinus the Proud, his wicked wife, and their children with fire and sword, nor will ever suffer any of that family, or any other whatsoever, to reign at Rome. Ye gods ! I call you to witness this my oath ! ” Then there arose a solemn response as if all Rome spoke.

So on that day when Lucretia died, Rome was the same as free. As a kingdom it ceased, and forever. And all the people were amazed at themselves for having borne tyranny so long.

They could not do enough to show their hatred towards the banished family. They tore down the palaces of Tarquin, and laid waste all the grounds that had been his. They cut down the trees and threw them into the river Tiber ; and all the sheaves from the fields then in harvest, were thrown where the trees had gone. And there was so much of this wreck of what had been beautiful orchards and gardens, that it settled fast in the mud and made an island.

As for Tarquin and his evil household, they fled to a city of one of the neighboring kings, from which he sent back messengers, begging to be restored. Then he tried conspiracy. And when he found that there was no mercy for him or his where they were known too well, he entered into an arrangement with such kings as were glad of a quarrel with Rome.

In those times fighting seems to have been the business of the human race. No child who has ever read a chapter of ancient history can fail to know that. War, war, with *somebody*! A sovereign hardly knew what to do with his people if they were not abroad on some undertaking of the kind.

One who was always ready to march on and attack the city of seven hills was Lars Porsena, king of Etruria. This famous Tuscan was powerful; he had rich cities, plenty of soldiers, and nothing else for them to do. He was close at hand, and it seemed an easy thing to help Tarquin back to the throne.

1245.

Rome had by this time become a magnificent city, and it was surrounded by a wall of masonry, each stone of which was "sufficient to load a cart." The

towers and battlements were of hewn stone. The river Tiber was also a defence ; but there was a bridge across it which would give entrance to an invading army, unless guarded.

It was on this bridge that Horatius Cocles fought at such tremendous odds. He was set there, at the river-gate, as guard, on a certain eventful day when Lars Porsena, with a vast army at his back bringing Tarquin, came marching on to Rome.

Because Horatius had a post that any private soldier might have occupied, you need not infer that he was of the lower order. He belonged to a patrician family, and was a descendant of one of the Horatii who was victor in the famous contest with the Curiatii. His uncle, too, was at that very time one of the Roman consuls.

Like all the young men of the new republic he had been subject to the severe discipline needful for a soldier. They all were taught to use themselves to exposure, to endure hardship, to carry heavy burdens, to despise fatigue. They were to be always ready for service. They were athletes, and athletes always in good training.

They were strong of arm and swift-footed, because they had been trained by the most thorough system of gymnastics. They could deal a deadly blow, and knew how to avoid one. Even the sons of rich men had this rigorous preparation which fitted them to do intrepid deeds. They served, too, without pay.

All the people from the surrounding country had fled into the city. And none too soon, for Porsena drove everything before him, and nearing the very walls, made ready for a sudden assault at the bridge. Both the Roman consuls were wounded in the desperate fight by the river side, and were carried out of battle.

Then, shame inexplicable, the soldiers of the republic, Romans, began to desert their ranks, fleeing before the enemy, when Horatius, throwing himself in their way, kept them one by one, warning them in the name of gods and men, that they were leaving to no purpose if they left the bridge behind them.

Meanwhile all was panic in the city.¹ It had been a dreadful day. Everybody was out. Not a woman could stay in her house. Wild-eyed and pale, the Roman mothers, with their children in their arms and

clinging to their robes, gathered in groups. The victory of the Tuscans and the return of Tarquin meant fire and slaughter, the lives of the little children trampled out, a horrible fate for all the tender and defenceless, the city spoiled, and freedom lost. It would be doomsday to Rome.

The tumult rose and swelled — that awful sound of war, the tread of many feet, the shouts, the neighing of horses, the clash of arms and hurling of javelins through the air. And where the clamor and contest were, a cloud of dust almost shut out the blue heaven.

Then, as the Roman forces fell back, crowding host upon host, till the city was fast being filled with her own soldiers, the word was passed on and along that Horatius was holding the bridge; whereupon the consuls took courage, and the soldiers again pressed out fresh for the fight.

The voice of this brave youth was heard ringing loud and clear above the din. He commanded his countrymen with axe or sword to destroy the bridge Without delay. *He* would sustain the onset of the foe, so far as one man could, while they were doing
(272) 3

it. And he proceeded to the end next the enemy, and, prominent amid the backs of those who were retreating, prepared for a hand-to-hand fight. At this sight two other young patricians, Spurius Lartius and Titus Herminius, filled with shame that he should be left alone, stood by him; and the three met the storm and fought the front of Porsena's host.

Soon those who were hewing down the bridge called to them to come back, for only a scanty part remained on which they could cross over. He compelled his comrades to go; but, instead of saving himself, he strode still nearer the foe. He stood for Rome, her champion and liberty's, and dared the invaders to come on.

The Etruscan chiefs were so astonished at the sight, the act was so audacious, that dead silence fell on them, and not a hand was raised against him.

Then this bold Horatius had the opportunity, which seldom comes to a man who dares to use it, of saying what he thought about a base act, to the very parties who had been guilty of it. He hurled the truth in their faces. The two armies, between whom the Tiber rolled, looked on and listened. And if there

was any sense of honor in Lars Porsena — and he was called a man of “great honor” — he must have tingled to his finger-tips with shame.

At last the chiefs let fly their javelins at Horatius, and missiles came thick and fast upon this solitary foe; but with his shield he dexterously held his ground, till he heard the crash of the last timber, and the triumphant shouts of his countrymen whom he had saved.

Then crying, “O Father Tiber, you sacred one, I pray receive these arms and this soldier in thy propitious stream!” he leaped, armed as he was, into the river, and though many darts were hurled at him, and he was stabbed in the hip by a Tuscan spear which lamed him for life, he swam over in safety to his friends.

He was received by them with the wildest plaudits. The air rang with shouts of joy. He was the conquering hero of the day. Men and women cried out that he must have gifts and honors. His statue must be set up.’

A decree was passed — very singular it seems — that every Roman should give him one day’s provisions. Were the “provisions” supplies of food, grain,

fruits, meats—*what?* Then must his store-house and cellar and granary have overflowed! For “even the women gave their quota,” and in all there must have been three hundred thousand contributors.

They put up a statue of him in brass—or some writers say copper—in the temple of Vulcan, to console him for his wound, and because he must always go lame—which misfortune would prevent his ever being made consul. Since they could not give him their highest office, they would do the next best thing. And last, and better than all the rest (if he had the Roman love for agriculture, for their mother earth and the green things she nurtures), they gave him as much land as he could plough around in a day.

And we may believe that Horatius drove his yoke of beautiful Roman oxen in a very large circle between the rising of that memorable sun and the going down thereof.

NOTE.—The story is found in Livy, book ii., chapter x. Also in “Plutarch’s Lives,” vol. i., “Life of Publicola;” and in Goldsmith’s “History of Rome.” Some interesting facts about the training of the Roman soldiers are in Plutarch’s “Arts and Sciences of the Ancients,” vol. i.; and of the government of the kings of Rome in Montesquieu’s “Spirit of Laws,” vol. i., book xi. Macaulay gives in charming verse the story of Horatius in his “Lays of Ancient Rome.”

III.—A SUCCESSFUL SECESSION.

IT was in the year 492 B. C.

A group of three people, talking in very earnest, excited tones, were standing, just at twilight, in the doorway of a plain cottage in Rome.

"It is of no use," the woman was saying sadly. She was a noble-looking woman, though bearing in her face and form the marks of care and toil. The two men, stalwart, fine-looking fellows of thirty and twenty-five, were evidently her sons, and they all were gazing down the road as if expecting some one.

"Caius will have no mercy," continued she. "I know these proud nobles too well."

"Mercy!" broke in the oldest son vehemently, "I don't ask for mercy, I want simple justice. Debt! Caius the Patrician to talk of 'debt' to my father! How did he lose his health but in the accursed wars the pride

and folly of these nobles brought upon us ? Didn't he lose his crops because the Volscians and Aequinians burned them to avenge the wrongs they had suffered from the nobles ? ”

“ Yes,” said the mother eagerly, “ he never would have borrowed the money from Caius but to keep you little children from want, because he was not allowed time and strength to earn food for you himself. He has given up everything but his life in the public service. Money could not repay what he has done for Caius, and now he persecutes us for the debt. Oh that it should come to this ! How many nights in the war times, when you were little children, my sons, did I look off to the hills and see the cottages and grainstacks burning, and wonder when our turn would come ; how often did I hear the cry, ‘ The Volscians are coming ! ’ and clasp my boy-babies in my arms, and long, oh, so earnestly, for the strong arms of my brave husband to defend us ! But no, he was away fighting battles for the patricians, perhaps, too, at that very moment lying faint and wounded ! Then I consoled myself, poor fool that I was, by thinking how they would delight to honor

him when he came back. I said to myself, I am a Roman matron, and these are sons of a Roman soldier. They will have a heritage of glory more than enough to make up for all this suffering. The Republic will be grateful —”

“Grateful !” exclaimed the younger son. “Rome does not know the meaning of the word, else why should she make such cruel laws ? ”

“But thirty days ago,” said the mother, “when Caius said he must have the debt paid, and your father took the choice the law allows between hopeless slavery for himself and you — think of that, my grown-up sons! — or answering with his body for the debt, I never really thought that Caius would press him to the limit of the law. Thirty days has your father tried to get the money, but it has been useless — I knew it would be. Now nothing remains, if Caius is still merciless, but for your father to be chained like a dog with heavy irons in Caius’ courtyard for Caius’ worthless sons to make sport of — oh, my boys, the very thought makes me wild ! Think of the sixty days’ misery and shame that must follow, during all which time they will feed him like

a beast with just food enough to keep him alive to feel his degradation, and then — hopeless slavery or a cruel death! Are you men, my sons, to see your old father, bent with age and crippled with wounds — ”

“ Mother,” interrupted Marcus, speaking slowly and heavily as men do when their passions are too fierce and deep for words, “ this shall *never* be. We have borne a great deal already, but this is too much. There he comes — let us meet him.” And they walked down the road where a tall and soldierly old man was seen slowly approaching.

“ Well, Valerius,” said Virgilia, the mother, “ is it all over ? ”

“ Yes,” said he ; “ Caius’ only answer to my entreaties was, ‘ You had your choice; the law must take its course.’ And his miserable son mocked and jeered at me — the profligate! But it is the last time ! ” And the old man’s eyes flashed ominously. “ There is only one thing left,” he continued slowly : “ we must leave Rome. There is surely free air enough somewhere for a Roman soldier to breathe. The other plebeians will go with us, and we will found a city that some day may bring these proud patri-

cians to their senses. "Virgilia," turning to his wife, and his tones softening a little, "could you bear to give up this home, poor as it is, where we have lived all these years, where our children were born, where our little Julia drooped and died?"

"Yes, my husband," answered Virgilia, though her eyes filled with tears. "Anything that will give you a fair chance."

"What have we to lose?" vehemently interrupted Marcus. "Haven't we all been tied down to hard wor^t and poor living, going without everything we wanted, and doing everything we didn't want to do, all these years; and what have we gained but to sink deeper into debt year by year? What better chance is there for *me* and *my* children?"

Valerius and his family belonged to that great class of common people who in all countries and in all times have been worth so much to the rich and noble, but yet have suffered so much from their hands. Cruel debtor laws for fifteen years had borne very heavily on the plebeians, as the common people were called in Rome. There had been open protests and low mutterings; but plebeians everywhere bear

verv much before they rebel against those they are accustomed to serve. Yet now the thought of seeing the brave old soldier, whom they all knew and respected, chained like a beast, was too much for even their long suffering. They knew too well all he had done for Caius the Patrician; they knew quite as well that this money which Caius would extort was only to go to buy Caius' profligate sons more white horses and gilded chariots. The plan of leaving the nobles to fight their own battles had been often talked of as a last resort. Mount Aventinus was not far away. It would not take long, in the sunny Italian climate, to make comfortable homes there for their families. In case of need it might be fortified—who knows?—against even Rome herself.

There was little sleep that night in the humble homes of the plebeians. Men came and went, talking in low tones; women were busy gathering together their most precious possessions. If the tears fell as they worked, they fell quietly; for though women dread to give up their old homes for new and untried ones, they stop at no sacrifice when the peace and safety of fathers and husbands and sons is threatened.

Gray dawn came. In the plebeian quarter all were strangely astir. It was not a noisy procession that marched through the gates, but there was a set look on the passing faces which showed that it might be dangerous to meddle with them. At any rate, nobody did, and by nightfall they were comfortably camping about the sides and top of Mount Aventinus. The nobles could not believe that these poor plebeians could be in earnest. They sent a messenger to ask them to come back.

But the plebeians answered, "No, thank you, we do not intend to come back, we like it better here."

The patricians were really disturbed. It would be very inconvenient to get along without the plebeians.

One bright morning not many days after the secession of the plebeians, Marcus' little daughter Lucretia stood beside her mother looking towards the city. Rome has now, even to the chance visitor, an irresistible and mysterious fascination. He dislikes to leave it, and he longs to return to it; and these people could not resist longing looks, even if they were self-exiled.

"Mamma," said little Lucretia, "I don't like it

here. Papa and grandpapa are so busy and sober, and you look so homesick. Can't we go back to our little cottage again? I want to see my rabbits, and your flowers were so lovely. Don't you want to go back, mamma?"

The tears sprang into her mother's eyes. "Yes, my child; but they were so hard and cruel to us there; and here — but who is coming?"

A company of men, evidently patricians, were approaching. Valerius and Marcus had seen them too, and had gone forward to learn their errand.

"O plebeians," called out the leader, "listen to our message."

Valerius gravely replied, "We will listen, but we will not heed, unless it brings good to us as well as to you."

"It is Menenius Agrippa," whispered Marcus to his father.

"I know him," answered Valerius; "a leader and a spokesman for the nobles, a smooth-tongued man. Speak on," continued he, turning to Agrippa.

And Menenius began telling the plebeians in persuasive tones how much they owed to the patricians,

how they governed the city and directed the wars ; how they never could have overcome Rome's numerous and dangerous enemies but for the skill of the patrician leaders, picturing the future glory of Rome, in which the plebeians would share as well as the nobles if they would but come back to the city and share in her dangers.

Valerius answered boldly :

“ Much good will Rome's glory do us if we must be slaves to Rome itself. Remember, Agrippa, who has fought the battles. Look at me, see my forty-five wounds, all in front, and not one in the back — yet here I am without the means of living, or a single acre of the land that has been bought with my blood ; nay, more, I cannot even call this poor wounded body my own. No, Menenius, no ! we will nevergo back to our old wrongs ! We will have a city of our own. If we have built your houses in Rome, we can build our own here, yea, and defend them too if need be.” •

At this the plebeians shouted : “ We will not go back ; leave us in peace, O patricians ! ”

But the nobles had no idea of doing this. They

were more convinced than ever that it would be neither pleasant nor safe to have a disaffected city growing up at their very gates.

“Listen!” shouted Agrippa again, as the voices of the plebeians grew louder and more excited. “You promised to listen. Hear this parable.”

“Hear his parable,” commanded Valerius. The plebeians stood once more silently listening.

“Once upon a time,” began Menenius Agrippa, “the head and eyes and hands and feet rebelled against the stomach. ‘We have waited on you long enough,’ they said; ‘what are you good for but to be fed and taken care of? The hands must work for food for you, the feet must do your errands, and the eyes must keep watch for you. You are idle and good for nothing. We will take care of ourselves, and leave you to look out for yourself.’ So the hands and feet busied themselves with their own affairs, the head ceased troubling itself to provide food for the stomach, and the eyes had plenty of leisure, and they paid no attention to the stomach’s entreaties and cries of distress. For awhile all seemed prosperous; but very soon the head began to grow

confused and dizzy, the eyes lost their clear vision, the hands lay limp and listless, and the feet dragged as if shod with lead. The stomach was the source of strength and beauty for the whole body, and in injuring that, they had destroyed themselves. Know, O plebeians," continued Agrippa, "that as the stomach is to the body, so are the nobles to the state. You injure them and you destroy yourselves. Come back to us ; Rome needs you, and you need us. If you will tell us what you want, we will try and do it for you. If our laws are too hard, we will make them easier."

The plebeians were evidently impressed with this speech. They gathered about Valerius and his sons for consultation. Soon Valerius answered, speaking for them all :

" We will come back on these conditions, and these only : Cancel all our outstanding debts ; set free those debtors who are now in the power of their creditors ; then, as a surety for the future, give us two men from our own people as protectors. Give them power to release us from any cruel and overbearing noble. Make their persons as sacred as the messengers of the gods, and let whoever harms them be accursed.

Give us two TRIBUNES OF THE PEOPLE, and we will be content!"

The plebeians took up the words, and repeated them with a great shout: "Forgive our debts, and give us two tribunes of the people, and we will go back!"

Then the patricians consulted together. They agreed to the conditions. A solemn treaty was made, as between two nations, that the rights of the plebeians should be forever guarded by their tribunes.

It was a joyful day for our little Lucretia and her mother when the company of the commons returned to the city. Her grandfather, Valerius, looked ten years younger. But his wife Virgilia only shook her head doubtfully: "Promises are good, but it is better to see how they are kept before we rejoice too much."

These fears were destined to be realized. Thirty-four years later the plebeians were wrought up to such a great state of indignation and anger by the acts of one of the decemvirs, named Appius Claudius, that the nobles were forced to give them greater security for freedom. The hated decemvirs were punished,

the tribunes of the people were restored, and the plebeians were counted as a part of the Roman people.

Thus it was that twice in the early history of Rome the common people rose and fought for their freedom. Thus was it that they obtained it.

NOTE. — Collateral Readings: Arnold's "History of Rome," chaps. viii. — xv. "Early Rome, from the Foundation of the City to its Destruction by the Gauls." W. Ihne (Epoch of History Series), chaps. xii. — xviii. Bonner's "Child's History of Rome," vol. i. chaps. xii — xviii. "Lay of Virginia," Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome."



APIUS CLAUDIUS.

IV.—MILTIADES AT MARATHON.

REJOICE! We have won the victory!" The words fell from a dying soldier, still bloody and worn by the fight, as he rushed into the Agora at Athens, and saw the crowd of anxious faces that surrounded him. His strength sufficed for nothing more. He sank on the pavement, overcome by the fatigue of a long journey on foot, after a struggle with the enemies of his home and of his countrymen such as the world had seldom witnessed.

It was a September day. I like to think that the sun was just sinking in the west and gilding with its latest rays the height of the Acropolis above the Agora, as the humble patriot breathed out his life in the service of Athens. Four hours before, he had left the victorious band of warriors who were ever after to be immortal, and, without wasting time in

taking off his heavy and battered armor, had hastened towards the capital, remembering the anxiety with which the event of the day was awaited there. As he started on his errand, perhaps he lingered a moment to be sure that he bore the true message, and that victory did indeed rest with the little band about his general, Miltiades. He saw the hosts of Persians flying to their ships. He saw, perhaps, the gilded shield throwing the rays of the afternoon sun over the hills to the commander of the fleet, a signal that he should hasten to attack Athens, then unprotected. The thought of perfidy which would thus give advantage to an enemy, it seems to me, stimulated him still more as he hastened on. The four long hours seemed many more as he struggled onward. His armor, heavy before the battle, grew heavier at every step. The thought came over him that his little reserved strength would be too slight to carry him to the end of his journey, but even that thought impelled him to new effort; and with a stout heart but failing body he forged along. At last the Acropolis appeared in sight. The end was almost reached. He felt his life-blood trickling from the

wounds inflicted by Persian spears, and he urged himself to make the supreme effort. The people thronged about his pathway, but he thrust them aside, and they followed him to the market-place. *Then* he felt that his goal was reached; and with an effort almost past belief, he cried, "Rejoice! We have won the victory!"

Can you not imagine the loving tenderness with which his body was lifted from the pavement, and with what solicitude his memory was cherished? He had not only fought for his country's freedom, but, in carrying the good news to the helpless at home, he had lost a life that he might have saved.

We cannot honor him by name, for to us he is but a voice, an heroic voice, crying with feeble tones, but sending a thrill through our very heart.

Let us try to enter into the feelings of the people to whom this dying soldier carried his welcome message. The scene lies in Greece, on a September day, 490 years¹ before Christ. For nine days Athens had been in suspense. The overwhelming army of a conquering nation lay but twenty-two miles distant, threatening the liberty of the citizens — their very

lives. I imagine there had been consternation in Athens when the cry went through the streets, "The Persians have come! The Persians have come!" for it was thought that nothing could withstand the armies of that great nation. The king was Darius, and under his sway were all of the peoples of Asia, except those of China. There were the Assyrians, the inhabitants of the great region of northern India, the Babylonians, the Syrians, the Phoenicians, the Chaldeans, the Medes, Parthians, Phrygians, and I do not know how many other terrible warrior-peoples.

Their progress had been one almost uninterrupted victory, and they now stood on the soil of Greece after having conquered islands and nations much more formidable than the little land they were now expecting to punish. You would be surprised, perhaps, to know that it would take ten countries as large as Attica to make one of the size of the State of Massachusetts, and four hundred to equal Texas. It is not nearly so large as Rhode Island. What did the great Darius fear from a country so small as that? Nothing at all. Some years before, he did not even know that there was such a country. He

found it out in this way: One of his cities was named Sardis. The Athenians sent some ships over the sea to capture it, and they succeeded. It was a surprise to Darius, and he asked who these Athenians were, and when he had been told, he ordered his bow to be brought to him, and as he shot an arrow from it, he said, "O supreme God, grant me that I may avenge myself on the Athenians!" He then appointed a servant to say to him every day at dinner, "Sire, remember the Athenians," so that he should not forget so little a nation.

Were not the people of Athens brave to dare to stand up against such a great king? They were; but I think that they knew that the people in the armies of Darius were not fighting for their homes and their families, and *could not* have the same strong feelings to nerve them in any struggle they were ordered to undertake. When the Athenians went out against the armies of Darius they remembered their children and their wives at home, and the sweet associations that clustered about their firesides. For them they fought, not for a great royal master. That is the reason they were strong.

The Persian army was at Marathon. It is a place connected with the mythical stories of the Greeks. It was there that Theseus killed the great bull which had been let loose by Hercules. If you were to stand on the plain of Marathon with your back to the sea where the ships of Persia lay, you would look up to the hills on which, and at the foot of which, the little army of the Athenians camped from the ninth to the twelfth of September B. C. 490. You would see that the Persians had a broad, open plain in which they could spread out their great army. This was not entirely an advantage, for the Athenians had the hills, and could overlook all the movements of their enemies.

The Persians were commanded by a general named Datis, who was not only skilful, but just then was flushed by the successes of his late campaign in the islands of Greece. He was aided also by an Athenian, named Hippias, who had been banished from the city about twenty years before. He was now a traitor, and wished to deliver his countrymen into the hands of their enemies. He was old, and his teeth were so loose that one of them dropped out

on the sands of Marathon as he sneezed, from which he augured that he should fail in his enterprise. It was a guess, but it proved not a bad one.

How many Persians there were on the shore and in the ships, I dare not say, for historians differ about it; but probably there were not less than one hundred thousand. It was a very large army to come against a land smaller than Rhode Island.

Before the Persians lay an army of Greeks, counting probably about ten thousand men. They were commanded by ten officers, the chiefs of their ten tribes, but one of them was permitted to direct the movements, because it was felt that he was the best qualified to win victory. His name was Miltiades. He had good reason to be ready to attack the Persians, for they had captured one of his sons; and he was no less ready to fight for Athens, for he had obtained a bad name there on account of some of his doings as ruler of the Thracian Chersonese, away over on the other side of the *Æ*gean sea, near where Constantinople is now.

Day after day the armies lay opposite to one another, neither being ready to begin the attack. Per-

haps the Persians thought that they could wear out the Greeks in time, and the Greeks were not sure enough of victory to dare to begin the battle. At last, however, Miltiades determined to attack his enemies. He arranged his little army at the foot of the mountains that look out upon the sea, stretching the line all across the narrow valley. He made it very strong on the sides, but left it rather weak in the middle.

He would have made it strong at every point if he had had enough men. On one side were about a thousand from Plataea, who had hastened to the defence of the country. They were the only people outside of Athens who joined in the battle. They had been aided by Athens some years before when attacked by Thebes, and owed their independence to this help. The Spartans should have sent soldiers, but they did not, saying that it was at a season when they could not fight, on account of their religion. Perhaps they did not want to help Athens; but they may have been honest in regard to their scruples, for they did send some soldiers, who arrived too late to be of service.

The troops stood neighbor by neighbor, friend by friend, each one feeling, as I have said, that he was fighting for his home. There was probably a body of spearmen about eight deep. After the trumpet had sounded the signal for action, the men advanced down towards the Persians on a run. We can imagine them singing, as they went, the words of *Aeschylus*: “*On, sons of the Greek! Strike for the freedom of your country! Strike for the freedom of your children and your wives -- for the shrines of your fathers' gods, and for the sepulchres of your sires! All, all is now staked upon the strife!*” We cannot imagine that the Persians urged one another on by any such chant. They were about, as they supposed, to crush out a little nation that they had, until lately, never heard of, and there were no motives of patriotism to appeal to on their part.

The Persians thought the men were running to sure destruction, and they advanced against the middle, where Aristides, one of the best men of the time, and Themistocles were in command. The line was weak there, and the Greeks retreated up the valley, but in the mean time the wings had put the

Persians to flight, and instead of following them, turned upon those who were pursuing their own men up the valley. This brought the Persians between two armies. It caused them to fall back to attack the new assailants. This gave Aristides and Themistocles time to mass their troops and renew the attack. The Persians, never before beaten, turned their backs and fled. There was the sea before them, and their ships, but they could not get into them quickly enough, and many were drowned, besides many were caught in the marshes that lay at the sides of the valley and perished. The Greeks followed them with all the spirit that fills the heart of a gallant warrior at the moment of victory. They struck the now terrified Persians down as they hastened to their ships, and hundreds of their bodies soon strewed the beach.

The soldiers from Sparta arrived in time to hear the shouts of victory and to see the ships of the Persians sailing away towards Athens, which Datis expected to find unprotected. More than six thousand of his men had fallen under the stern strokes of the Athenian swords, or had been lost in the marshes

or the sea. Only one hundred and ninety-two of the men of Athens had fallen. Was it not a wonderful victory for the little army of Miltiades? The bodies of the Greeks were buried on the field, contrary to the usual custom, and a mound was raised over them.

When Datis reached Athens, he found that Miltiades was there ready to meet him, and he therefore sailed homewards. If he had conquered the Greeks, he might have proceeded against the other nations of Europe. Rome was very weak at the time, and there was no other nation able to resist. Asia would have spread over Europe then, would it not? I think it would have made a great difference in the civilization of Europe if Miltiades had not stopped the Persians at Marathon. But this is not our subject of inquiry. We wish only to admire the patriotic struggle for freedom that has made the names of Miltiades and Marathon immortal.

The poet Byron thus speaks of the scenes we have now considered as—

“The battle-field where Persia’s victim horde
First bowed beneath the brunt of Hellas sword,
As on the morn to distant glory dear,

When Marathon became a magic word;
Which uttered, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the conqueror's career,
The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow;
Mountains above, earth's, ocean's plain below;
Death in the front, destruction in the rear—
Such was the scene."

NOTE.—COLLATERAL READING.—The geography of Marathon may be studied in Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography," and the history in the same author's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography." The story of Marathon is told in Sir Edward Creasy's "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," in Mrs. Yonge's History of Greece, in Grete's History, and, I suppose, in any good history of that country.

V.—TWO IMMORTAL NAMES.

ONE spring day nearly five hundred years before Christ, a Greek boy and girl stood earnestly talking before the palace of the King of Sparta. The girl was Hervina, one of the maids of honor of the wife of the young King Leonidas, and the boy was her brother Ephialtes, one of the king's favorite pages, a handsome youth and an expert in athletic sports. In Sparta, at this period, great attention was paid to physical exercise; even the girls were drilled in gymnasiums, and Hervina was one of the fleetest runners in all the country round, while her brother was an accomplished boxer, tumbler and wrestler as well as a reckless rider and furious driver. He was as ambitious as he was handsome, his ruling motive an overweening fondness for praise. The Lady Gorgo, the wife of King Leonidas, sometimes

shook her head and said she feared Ephialtes was too ambitious, for his desire of excelling made him unscrupulous of ways and means. But Leonidas patted the shoulder of his favorite, and said that ambition and love of praise rightly directed were good steeds if held in with the rein of principle.

There was something in Ephialtes' keen, watchful, but sidelong glance which might have reminded one of Plato's words: "Have you never yet observed of those that are termed 'wicked yet clever,' how sharply the little soul looks out?" He seemed ever on the watch for means of benefiting himself by every circumstance and occurrence. Just now while the city resounded with lamentation at the news just received by a herald that the Persians were advancing upon Greece, Ephialtes' face was flushed with delight, and he trembled with excitement as he related his own personal plans to Hervina.

"The Persians are really upon the march," he exclaimed; "Xerxes commands in person the land force, which is going around through Asia Minor, while a navy of innumerable ships follows him by sea."

Hervina turned pale. "He means to avenge his

father's disgrace ten years ago at Marathon."

"Ah, didn't the Athenians whip him well there!" exclaimed the boy. "I hope we Spartans will do some of the fighting this time. A congress of the rulers of all the states of Greece has been summoned to meet at Corinth to concert measures of defence. Leonidas is at this moment bidding adieu to the queen. He wishes to reach Corinth with all despatch, and has chosen me to conduct his chariot, for he knows no one can better manage his Thessalian horses. Mark me, Hervina, I go a simple charioteer; but when this war is over my name shall be famous. I have consulted the oracle, and have received the response that of all the Spartans who march out, the names alone of Leonidas and Ephialtes shall be handed down to posterity."

As he spoke, a groom led up the champing horses and gilded chariot, a curtain was withdrawn from a portal of the palace, and Leonidas came down the steps dressed in armor. He motioned to Ephialtes, who took the reins and leapt gracefully to his position. Then Leonidas mounted, waved his hand to the Lady Gorgo, and the chariot rolled away.

Then came a weary waiting-time, varied by messages which brought dismay. Now they heard of the advance of the Persian fleet, of the sacking of towns and cities, and once or twice hurried missives came from Corinth from Leonidas. One ran as follows:—

“I am consumed with impatience,” Leonidas wrote, “to begin hostilities at once, to march forward with my brave Spartans to meet the foe. Instead of this, I find myself involved in argument and conciliation, in the persuasion and threatening of our brother rulers to undertake this war. From Argos and Boeotia we have nothing to hope. The Korkyraians profess to have sent us sixty ships, but they have not arrived. I fear that they have deserted to the enemy. Genlon, the despot of Syracuse, offers to bear the whole expense of the war if we will recognize him as our leader; but to this none of the congress will agree, and Genlon has sent us an insulting message that we are likely to have many leaders but few to be led. The greater part of the congress are now so terrified by the approach of the Persians that they are for sending Xerxes at once a present of earth and water in token of our submission to

him. I am no orator or statesman, and all I could do in answer to such dishonorable proposals was to pour out my soul in wrath and indignation. Fortunately the skilled general and leader, Themistocles, is one of the Athenian delegation. His patriotism and bravery equals my own, while his prudence and wily power of governing men and making all things subservient to his will is something at which I admire and wonder. He works night and day, and keeps four scribes writing constantly, demanding help from Crete, Sicily and the other island allies of Greece; making requisitions of supplies, moneys and men from every state; numbering the army, fitting out the navy, reconciling enemies, encouraging the cowardly, bribing the avaricious, tempting the ambitious. He is indefatigable; he is in the saddle and everywhere at the same moment. He pours forth a stream of persuasive eloquence before the congress, and the next moment is despatching a deputation of couriers with missives, or listening to the reports of his spies. I admire the man, but his work is not my work, and I long for fierce fighting. He has promised me that I shall lead in the first decisive action. I trust that

all will soon be arranged and that we shall meet the enemy in Thrace. I commend myself to thy prayers.

“LEONIDAS.”

This letter was brought by Ephialtes himself.

“I have received an important mission,” he said. “Themistocles has appointed me a spy, and I am on my way to the Persians. I shall discover all I can and return with information for the congress.”

Again Hervina could do nothing but wait and beseech the gods. The Lady Gorgo quieted her own impatience by embroidering a marvellous crocus-colored robe for Minerva. She had designed a strange border of spiders’ webs (for the spider was sacred to Minerva), and she worked in the webs with a lace of silver thread, while the spiders’ eyes were tiny emeralds. While she worked she besought Minerva to lie in the path like a venomous spider and bite the heel of the invader. Her prayers were addressed not alone to Minerva: she sent costly golden cups and vases to the shrines of all the other Grecian divinities, and caused Hervina and her other maidens to sing in the sleepless night while their needles flashed at their embroidery under the flaring

lamps, the new invocation to all the gods and goddesses written by the poet *Aeschylus*:

"The time demands it : why, then, why delay?
Broider the pall, give garlands as you pray.
If e'er thy soul had pleasure in the brave,
God of the golden helm, hear Mars, and save !
And thou by whom the pawing steed arose,
Great Neptune, save us, free us from our foes.
Thou terror of the brute, Apollo, hear —
In all thy terrors rush upon the foe !
Chaste virgin huntress, Dian, ever dear,
Wing the keen arrow from thy ready bow !
By every shrine the eager vow is paid,
Hear us, ye guardian gods, hear us and aid ? "

Ephialtes paused with them for a hurried meal on his return from his mission. His mien had changed. His overweening confidence was lost. He had sprinkled dust upon his head, and his face was blanched with terror. "We are lost!" he cried; "the whole population of Greece would be as nothing to oppose to the formidable host approaching. Xerxes has gathered ships by thousands, men by nations. I had scarce come within the lines before I was detected and brought before the king. I felt certain that

I was condemned to death. But no: he ordered one of his soldiers to go with me throughout the army and assist me in numbering his hosts and in pointing out the vast preparations which he had made for this war. After this was over he gave me a safe conduct to return and report to those who sent me."

"And wilt thou carry out his design of intimidating our generals?" asked Hervina.

"What else can I do?" replied the boy moodily. "I were an ill friend to my country should I falsely encourage its armies to certain defeat. Listen, Hervina, and I will tell thee of what stuff this cruel and haughty tyrant is made. I came up to him at Mount Athos. It was upon this rocky promontory that the ships of his father were wrecked. Here, therefore, he halted his army and set them to cutting a canal across the isthmus which separates the mountain from the mainland. It is a superhuman attempt; but ere I left I saw the canal half completed, and so wide that two of his double-banked galleys could ride side by side. I heard, too, the proclamation which he caused his herald to read to the mountain: "Hear, O Athos, I command thee that

thou refrain from doing damage to any of my ships. For so surely as thou causest their shipwreck I will pluck thee up by thy roots, and hurl thee into the sea." And the mountain has obeyed him ; for instead of acting as a bulwark and a defence to Greece, it stands as a breakwater against the sea for the Persians who ride in a quiet harbor behind it. Hast thou not heard also how he chastised the sea when it had broken his bridge of boats by which he thought to have crossed the Hellespont? He caused three hundred lashes to be applied to it, and cast into it a pair of chains and manacles, together with the heads of the engineers who had constructed the bridge. If thus he disposes both of the mountains and the sea of Greece, surely we shall be giving him only that of which he hath already taken possession if we send him the earth and water which he demands."

The Lady Gorgo heard this with flashing eyes. "Go and tell that tyrant," she exclaimed, "that as yet he has had to do but with the land and water of Greece, but let him reserve his boasts until he hath met its men."

The message of Ephialtes was received bravely by

Leonidas. "Let me go," he besought of the congress, "and teach this would-be conqueror that it is not the multitude of an army that counts, but its valor."

"It is indeed time," replied Themistocles gravely; and the command of the army was at once voted to Sparta. "I will take seven thousand of the allied forces," said Leonidas, "with three hundred of my Spartans, and we will advance to the defence of the frontier from the land force, while do you plan for the reception of the navy ere it reach Athens." The Pass of Thermopylæ (or The Hot Gates, so called from the presence of hot mineral springs in the neighborhood and a broken Phocian wall which had once been provided with iron gates), a narrow defile through Mount Oeta, with craggy mountains upon the left and an impassable bog upon the right, was the place chosen as a point of defence. It was the only way from upper into lower Greece (you can find it on your maps between Thessaly and Locris), and it lay in the direct route of the Persians. On his way to this position Leonidas paused to urge his wife to retire with her maidens to Corinth, where they would be safer than in the north of Greece. He left

Ephialtes to escort them, and, gathering his chosen warriors, hastened on to Thermopylæ.

On their way southward Hervina noticed that her brother had grown sullen. She understood his discontent; his eager spirit chafed at being sent back with the women, instead of being allowed to share the exploits of the warriors.

The Lady Gorgo, gathering together her women and her jewels, assigned to Ephialtes the guard of the rear of her little train. The second day he lagged behind more and more. Hervina drew the rein of her milk-white palfrey and waited until he came up. Their companions had just disappeared around a turn in the road. Ephialtes looked up and saw her standing there alone, regarding him with sympathetic, questioning eyes. Seizing her palfrey's rein, Ephialtes struck spurs to his own steed and galloped swiftly toward the north. At night they slept under the open sky, and by day they pursued their way steadily toward Mount Oeta, whose steep sides they climbed by a lonely and deserted road. Hervina never doubted that their destination was Thermopylæ, but when they reached the summit of the mountain they

found the place, though suited for a fastness, only slenderly guarded by a small band of Phocians.

"We seek Leonidas," said Ephialtes to the soldier who barred his pathway. "Below," replied the soldier; and he pointed to a somewhat wider pass in the mountains below them, where, with the barricade of an ancient wall in front, the marsh formed by the overflow of the hot springs on their right, and the precipitous cliff down which Ephialtes now looked upon their left, the followers of Leonidas were even now engaged in battle with the Persians.

Ephialtes turned and looked toward the west. The camp of the Persians with its myriad tents filled all the valleys, and their foraging bands were discernible collecting cattle and prisoners from a little hamlet on the mountain-side.

"Why has not Leonidas more heavily garrisoned this pass?" asked Ephialtes. "The Persians could easily swarm up that path and overcome you."

"There is a good road from here to the Hot Gates; we have only to fall back, follow this ridge downward, turn to the left, and find ourselves safe in the rear of Leonidas."



"Yes, but the Persians could follow—then Leonidas would be hemmed in on every side."

The soldier shrugged his shoulders. "Mars forbid that any one inform the Persians of the path leading hither," he replied. Further conversation was suspended as they watched the attack upon the Spartans at the Hot Gates.

Huge rocks were rolled down upon the Persians; but their front ranks were driven forward by those behind, and again and again pressed to the onset, only to be driven back with slaughter.

"He has conquered for to-day," exclaimed Ephialtes. "That general with the glittering helm is Mardonius; he fought at Marathon ten years ago; he knows the temper of our Greeks—see, he is trying in vain to rally his men. But they retire, while Leonidas has respite to prepare for a fiercer struggle. Exercising in the plain below is the Immortal Band. See the gleam of the gold and silver pomegranates at their lance-heads! Should they be ordered to charge, Leonidas would have to surrender."

The Phocian soldier smiled grimly. "You know more of the Persians, my fine youth, than of Leonidas."

das," he said scornfully. "Yonder Immortal Band is even now upon the march—and you shall see them flee. Leonidas had hard fighting all day yesterday, and conquered. He is holding his own to-day. He will never surrender."

The tide of battle rolled more fiercely than before. The Immortal Band fought well; many fell, but none turned to flee. Once the followers of Leonidas gave way and fell backward, and the Persians poured in through the gaping wall. But the disaster was only a feint; the Spartans waited until goodly numbers had swarmed into the trap, and then sprang forward and massacred all, hurling the dead and dying into the bog. At length, the Immortal Band fell back. The attack was ended for that day.

"He has conquered!" murmured Hervina: "surely the Persians can make no fiercer attempt."

"Let us hasten by the road they have shown me, to Leonidas," said Ephialtes, hurriedly.

They rode on for some distance in silence. The road made a long detour, and at last Ephialtes halted. "Hervina, if we tie our horses in the goat-herd's hut yonder we can climb down into this ravine and

follow it, and so reach Leonidas more quickly than by keeping to the regular road."

Within the hut where they fastened their horses they found several sheepskins.

"We will attract less attention, should we encounter Persians, and also be better able to clamber, if we change our court clothing for these sheepskins," suggested Ephialtes.

Clothed as goat-herds, they proceeded on their way. They reached the valley in safety just as the moon rose, and cautiously went forward through the twisted olive trees, looking for some path by which they could gain the Hot Gates. Suddenly, from the fantastic shadows, two men appeared before them, while a small squad of soldiers followed—all Persians. One of the men held a headless spear, to which was affixed a white pennon; the other carried upon his head a heavily laden golden vase.

"Who are ye?" exclaimed the strangers and Ephialtes in the same breath. "I am a simple goat-herd," replied Ephialtes.

"And I," said the foremost stranger, "am Hydarnes,

a herald sent by King Xerxes to the Spartan king."

"But your back is turned to his fortress," said Ephialtes.

"Yea," replied the other; "for I am returning from a fruitless quest. My king, hopeless of storming his stronghold, had written him that if he would permit the Persians to pass, he should reign unmolested in Sparta under his own royal protection."

"And Leonidas refused this offer?"

"Yea, and this goodly golden jar of jewels which it is now my toilsome lot to bear back again over this weary way," said the second Persian.

"It matters little," added the first: "we shall starve them out in the end — they are not provisioned for two weeks longer; but it chafes his royal highness to be thus stopped upon his march."

"How think you would Xerxes reward that man," asked Ephialtes, "who would show him a speedy manner of storming the citadel of Leonidas — show him another pass across the mountains higher up, dominating their stronghold, and guarded by but a handful of men?"

"Know you of such a pass?" asked the Persians

eagerly, while Hervina, uttering a cry of despair, clutched her brother's arm.

"If Xerxes will make me the same offer which Leonidas has refused, I will show him a secret path by which he can take his enemy."

Hervina threw herself upon her brother in an agony of grief and shame; but he shook her off, saying:

"My own welfare and fortune are more to me than that of Leonidas. Go to the cave of the goat-herd and there await my return." Then, following the lead of the Persians, he disappeared.

Hervina stood thunderstruck. Then suddenly a wild hope kindled in her breast. It was not too late to warn Leonidas, not too late for him to retreat. With reckless leaps she climbed down the steep mountain-side, clinging to projecting bits of rock where even a goat would not have ventured. Another song of the poet Aeschylus which the Lady Gorgo had taught her came to her mind, and while she clambered she repeated to herself :

"Ye rising hills whose reverenced heads
Majestic wave their awe-commanding shades,
What woes our shudd'ring souls await,

Or flying on the wings of fear,
In some cavern dark and drear,
Deep shall we plunge and hide us from our fate.
Oh that I could as smoke arise,
That rolls its black wreaths through the air ;
Mix with the clouds that o'er the skies
Show their light forms and disappear,
Or like the dust be tossed
By every sportive wind till all be lost !
They come, they come, the haughty foes !
These are but preludes to my woes.
Look down, thou Sovereign of the world, and save !”

She remembered joyfully how she had often outstripped the other Spartan girls in foot-races, and her training stood her in good stead now. She reached Leonidas just as the Persians set out on their march for the upper pass.

“It is certain death to remain,” said the Spartan king as he looked at the frowning cliff soon to be held by the foe. “I order the seven thousand sent me by the allied Greeks to retire, bearing little Hervina with them !”

“Come too,” pleaded Hervina.

“Nay, little one, I have an example to set to Greece—a lesson to teach the Persians. They must

know that Leonidas and his three hundred were not afraid to face three millions and certain death. The post will be stormed, but it will not be deserted."

On the next day Leonidas and his brave Spartans fell. But the example and the lesson were not wanting. Xerxes learned for the first time of what stuff patriots were made, and the knowledge unnerved his arm for further effort. The death of their countrymen fired the other Greeks to emulate their valor and avenge their massacre. At Salamis, Themistocles dealt a death-blow to the Persian navy, and Xerxes with his shattered army fled, while the defeat of his general Mardonius at the battle of Plataea closed the war.

Ephialtes died a miserable outcast on Persian soil, realizing at last, let us trust, the meaning of the ambiguous oracle, and that while the name of Leonidas would be rendered immortal by his bravery and willing death for his country, his own would be handed down to endless ignominy and disgrace.

VI.—AT THE TOE OF THE BIG BOOT.

THE story that I am going to tell belongs to a time so far away, and a place so different from any that we have ever seen, that it is hard to make it seem real to our minds. In trying to make it real to mine, I found it helpful to invent a little boy, a boy who never existed, so far as I know, but who might have existed as well as not, and try to imagine just how the events I am about to describe would have seemed to him, and what he would have thought about them. Somehow my little boy clothed the dry bones of history with flesh and blood for me; and in the hope that he may do the same to you, I will introduce him. His name shall be Menander, but his mother, and his little sister Pensilea, call him by the shorter and prettier name of Mena. He is ten years old, and he lives in the

ancient city of Syracuse, on the Island of Sicily, in the year 416 b. c.; that is more than two thousand years ago. You know there were little boys then just as there are now, difficult as it is to realize it.

If you look at the map of Sicily, you will find a city of Syracuse marked upon it. It stands where the old city of which I write stood, but is not the same place at all, but a comparatively modern town, built upon and among the ruins of the former Syracuse. It is a small city of about sixteen thousand inhabitants, whereas the ancient Syracuse in its best days had a population of nearly or quite a million. It was, in fact, five cities built closely together on a knob or tongue of land between two fine bays, and on the hills and cliffs behind it. One of the bays, the great harbor of Syracuse, was nearly land-locked by an island which lay across its mouth; the other was called the Bay of Thapsus. The highest part of the city was named the Epipolaæ, and a strong wall built round the whole defended the place.

Our little Mena lived in that division of Syracuse which was known as Tyche. His father's house

stood on hilly ground. From its porch the blue bays could be seen to right and to left, and westward beyond the Epipolæ, the slopes of Mt. Hybla, where bees hummed all day long over beds of sweet-thyme, making, as Mena well knew, fragrant honey most delicious to taste. Higher still, from the very hill-top, could be seen the great cone of Mt. Ætna, standing miles away amid its rings of olive groves and orange orchards. It was an awful mountain to Mena's imagination, for the veil of quiet smoke which perpetually hung over its top, curled upward from a great centre of fire, and Mena had heard the mountain roar aloud as if with an awful voice, and felt the earth shake even in Syracuse with the force of its eruption. All the people in the city trembled when the voice of Ætna was heard, and crowded to the temples to pray the gods to have mercy and spare their lives.

Young as he was, little Mena had heard of Athens, the most powerful city of the world at that time, and called the Mistress of the Seas, as England is to-day. She had more ships and better sailors than any other state. Every Athenian citizen was a prac-

tised seaman. Mena had also stood by and listened to his father Laicus talking with the neighbors of the alliance made between Athens and the citizens of *Aegesta*, a town in Sicily, which was at war with Syracuse. Mena did not know what an "alliance" meant, but he laughed, as the rest did, at the droll story told by Eglon the metal-worker, of the deception practised by the *Aegestans* upon the Athenian commissioners; how they had borrowed all the gold and silver dishes and vessels from the neighboring cities, and at each entertainment had this mass of treasure smuggled in at the back door to give the Athenians the idea that every citizen of *Aegesta* was enormously rich, and the wealth of the whole town almost incalculable. Mena laughed because the grown people laughed; but no one felt at all like laughing when, a few months later, the successful deceit bore fruit, and the great Athenian fleet sailed into the harbor of Syracuse; one hundred and thirty-four war-galleys, besides numerous store-ships, with a vast force of warriors, slingers, and bowmen. They landed with great blowing of trumpets, and shouts, and peals of music; and it seemed as if

nothing could save Syracuse. Mena's little face was sober enough that day. His mother wept and wailed in the temple with the other women; Pensilea clung to his neck and cried, and Mena could have found it in his heart to cry too, only he was a boy, and had a boy's dignity to maintain.

If the Athenian generals had been wise men, Syracuse would certainly have fallen into their hands during those first moments of surprise and terror. Perhaps it seems to you that it doesn't matter much now whether it was taken or not; that its capture can make no difference to us at this far-away date. But you are mistaken. "The known world did not contain the power that seemed capable of checking the growing might of Athens, if Syracuse could once be hers." Syracuse taken, Carthage, Sparta, the Roman Republic, then in its weak beginning, must next have fallen a prey. Athens would have been mistress of the world, as Rome afterwards became. Little boys to-day would be studying Greek instead of Latin grammars. Greek names instead of Latin would be used in science and medicine; everything would be different from what it now is, though just

how different no one can say. So you see it does matter even to us that Syracuse was not captured by the Athenians in the year 416 b. c.

Three generals were in command of the Athenian fleet. One of them, named Nicias, was held in much esteem among his countrymen for wisdom and respectability. His value as a leader was lessened by some defects of character. A capital and successful soldier whenever he made up his mind to do anything, he was timid, vacillating, fearful of making mistakes, altogether destitute of dash and vigor. He was superstitious also, and easily alarmed by omens and signs, and, as will be seen, partly from slowness of understanding, and partly from constitutional caution, he once and again let chances slip by unimproved, which might have given him the victory.

The second general was named Lamachus; but as he was killed soon after the siege began, we need not say anything about him.

The third general was Alcibiades, who has been called "the Bolingbroke of antiquity," and "the most perfect example of genius without principle that history produces." Alcibiades was clever, ambitious,

selfish, base, a fop in his outward appearance, a scheming traitor at heart. It seems to me that he might with equal propriety be called "the Benedict Arnold of antiquity." The three generals pulled in three different ways from the outset, as a divided authority almost always does. Alcibiades wanted to attack at once; Nicias as usual hesitated and delayed, and after a little drew his troops off and made a demonstration on a different part of the island. Mena and other little boys waved their arms and shouted for joy when they saw part of the galleys sailing away. But by and by the galleys came back, and General Nicias, slow and sure, began to build a high double wall round the city, so that no one from without could get in, and no one from within could get out. The space between the walls was roofed over to make barracks for the troops. The galleys watched the harbor mouth, and as soon as the wall was done the Athenians proposed to sit down quietly like cats at a mouse-hole, and wait till their prey was starved out. All this was a very pretty plan, and it would undoubtedly have been successful, except that unfortunately somebody out-

side the wall was working hard against Athens. And who do you think this somebody was? No other than Alcibiades, late general of the Athenian forces.

For Alcibiades had left enemies behind him at home, and they had hatched a plan for his ruin. They accused him of sacrilege, and the Senate ordered him to return for trial. This he was too wary to do. He disobeyed the order, and was sentenced to death for doing so; whereupon, bitterly angry, he said, "I will show them at Athens whether I am dead or not." And he fled to Sparta, which was one of the chief enemies of his country, and bent all his energies to stirring up the Spartans to send relief to Syracuse. He made many eloquent and artful speeches, betrayed the secrets of the Athenian leaders, and warned the Spartans that if they neglected this opportunity, their turn would come next and they would rue it when too late. His warnings were listened to, and the Spartans sent one of their bravest generals, Gylippus by name, with a squadron of vessels to land on Sicily and raise a force for the relief of Syracuse.

That city meanwhile was in a desperate condition. Nicias had finished his double wall, all but a few feet, provisions were growing scarce, and an assembly had actually met to discuss the terms of surrender, when a galley came dashing into the harbor, and, avoiding the Athenian vessels, rowed straight for the town. Mena had run down the hill to see the strange ship land. He watched the soldiers come on shore — stalwart men in brown cloaks — and with an odd feeling of excitement, ran up the steep street to the place of assembly, pulled his father's arm, and whispered that something had happened, there was "News, news!" and wouldn't he come and hear what it was.

Ah, it was the old story over again of the kingdom lost for the lack of a horse-shoe nail. Nicias was so sure of his victory that he had slackened discipline, and his men had grown careless. The one little galley splashing across the harbor had not seemed worth stopping, but it brought the news that Gylippus was at hand, and that changed everything. The very name of Sparta put courage into the Syracusans. And they decided to defend the city to the last.

Nicias must have known through his spies of the movements of Gylippus, but he does not seem to have done anything about it. And he and his men were taken by surprise when, one fine day, the army of re-inforcement appeared suddenly and attacked them. Gylippus wasted no time. He was of quite a different temper from Nicias. While the latter hesitated what to do, he pointed on the Epipolæ, and lo! the Athenians became the besieged instead of the besiegers, for they were penned into the low grounds by the harbor mouth, while Gylippus commanded the heights above. Then he made a dash, and captured the fort where the Athenians had stored most of their naval supplies. The double wall did little good now. Gylippus and his troops marched into the city through the gap still unenclosed, and the Syracusans marched out. It was a fine day for Menæ and the other boys, and you may be sure that they followed the Spartan soldiery about, and whenever they got a glimpse of Gylippus and his brown cloak, clapped their hands and shouted with all their might.

But though Nicias had blundered, Athens was still

unsubdued, and her wrath was terrible. On hearing the news, she lost not a moment, but made haste to raise another force to go to the relief of the first, a force almost as strong as that had been. Poor little Mena ! It was a direful day indeed in Syracuse when the terrible new fleet came sailing into the harbor, seventy-three great war vessels, with eight thousand soldiers on board. The ships were painted on the outside with splendid pictures. Flags flew from all the masts, armor glistened in the sun, music sounded from the decks, and the shouts of the crews were answered by the shouts of the army on shore. The general in charge of the fleet was Demosthenes, not the famous orator, but a brave soldier of the same name, who was almost equally famous in his day.

And now indeed the crisis was come. The first effort of Demosthenes was to regain the Epipolæ, which he at once saw to be the key of the position. Under cover of the darkness he led his troops by night round the base of the hill, and climbing the sharp cliffs at the back, surprised the Syracusan outposts on the summit, drove them from their entrenchments, and marched down toward the city, sweeping

all before him. The darkness, the surprise, favored him. Gylippus in vain sent re-inforcements. Half an hour more, and it seemed that the Athenians must take Syracuse. You can imagine the terror and dismay, and how Mena and little Pensilea, wakened by the noise, clung together with scared faces, listening to the shouts and roar of voices and the trumpet-calls—not knowing who shouted, or what was happening on the hill above in the dark, dreadful night.

Only one regiment stood firm amid the flying Syracusans. This was a brigade of Boeotians, posted near the base of the slope. They not only did not flee, but reformed their lines and charged the Athenians, who, demoralized by success, were taken by surprise and fell back. This brought confusion to the rest of the Athenian army which was pressing down behind them. The confusion became a hopeless tangle. The uncertain light deceived them. Friend could not be known from foe. Athenian attacked Athenian, the Syracusans rallied and charged them hotly, driving hundreds of them over the cliffs, where they perished miserably. When

morning dawned the proud Athenian host was a wreck, and the power of Athens was broken, never to be restored again.

I am much afraid that Nicias, who had disapproved of the attack, may have said, "I told you so," or whatever is its equivalent in classic Greek, to Demosthenes when he and his wretched remnant straggled back into camp.

The galleys were safe still, and, in spite of the defeat, a formidable force of Athenians survived, and had Nicias set sail at once for home, Athens might still have had a chance to rally. But Nicias never did anything "at once." He was very superstitious, as I told you, and unfortunately there was a total eclipse of the moon just then, and Nicias took it for an omen, and delayed sailing till he should see how the moon looked at the corresponding time next month. Meanwhile the Syracusans occupied themselves in blocking up the harbor, so that when Nicias at last got the moon's permission to start, the ships could not get out.

The rage of the other commanders and of the soldiery can be imagined. They clamored indig-

nantly to be allowed to fight, and Nicias was forced to yield. The Syracusans had galleys also, lighter and more manageable than the great war-ships of the Athenians, and more easily handled in the harbor where the vessels were pent. A great naval battle, one of the greatest that the world has ever known, took place, and its result was the complete destruction of the Athenian fleet. Only that portion of the army which was on shore was spared, but this amounted to nearly forty thousand men; and had Nicias the Unready marched at once, that very night, he might at least have got this remnant of his command off in safety.

Gylippus knew this, and he knew too that the Syracusans were so intoxicated with triumph, so deep in feasting and in offering joyful sacrifices, that he could not induce them to fight or to pursue till the revelling was done. So he traded on the well-known weakness of Nicias, and sent persons to advise him in a friendly way to delay his march because the Syracusans had seized the passes. Poor simple Nicias believed, and sat still, and next day the Syracusans *did* seize the passes. The Athenian army

started, but it found the bridges cut, the fords defended; every step had to be fought, everywhere were enemies. The retreat became a disorderly flight, the troops were slaughtered by thousands, the generals were taken prisoners; only a scattered few of the great host ever saw their native shores again.

So complete was the defeat that for a long time Athens remained in ignorance of her ruin. No one returned to tell the tale. It was finally made known by the lips of a stranger, who, sitting in a barber's shop to be shaved, mentioned it as a bit of news which of course every one must already know. The barber rushed into the street with cries of horror, the magistrates met, and the stranger was just being put to the torture to make him unsay the truth, when messengers arrived with the tidings.

So Syracuse was saved, and little boys to-day learn Latin instead of Greek!

I hope Mena was sorry and pitiful when a few weeks later old Nicias was put to death by his captors. In spite of his weakness he was an honest-hearted man, and bore himself bravely and patiently

in that terrible retreat. But how can one tell what little Mena may have thought two thousand years ago—or even if there were a little Mena?

NOTE.—For a fuller account of the siege of Syracuse see Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian war, Plutarch's lives of Nicias and Alcibiades, Creasy's Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World, and Grote's *Greece*, vol. vii., pp. 142-352.

VII.—THE TRIUMPH OF AN IDEA.

DID you ever hear of Carthage? If you will take your map, you will see the Mediterranean, and that famous boot of Italy, kicking poor little Sicily out into the water as if she were a pedlar. Right under Sicily, just west of it, you will see a little peak of Africa looking up saucily, as if to say, "How far are you going, neighbor?"

Well, that is Tunis now; but it *was* Carthage! and that is just what Carthage was always saying to Rome, proud and powerful neighbor. Carthage was the most beautiful, rich, luxurious place you ever dreamed of, but she hated Rome, that "strong young republic of the West." Rome was making laws for you and me, while Carthage was making money; Rome was making soldiers of every citizen, and also patriots, while Carthage was making sea-

men and merchants. A great commercial city was Carthage, sending her fleets to Cornwall for tin, and to the Baltic for amber, before the mariner's compass was invented, or Bowditch's *Navigator* written! They sailed all around Africa, you may be sure, and on land they sent their caravans down into rich gold-producing Africa. Oh, they liked to make money, these Carthaginians, and to fight and to conquer rich countries. And they understood agriculture too, and had beautiful gardens and luxuriant vineyards, and plantations of figs and olives; rich pasture lands; and the wealthy Carthaginians lived in grand villas. The climate was very fine; and if enough rain did not fall, they irrigated the fields with artificial canals and fountains so that the land blossomed like the rose. They had an excellent constitution, which gave them social order and peace. They had every comfort in the world. Every Carthaginian could find plenty to do; and he could travel as much as he pleased, or stay at home and be happy. Now, should you not think that they might have let Rome alone, these fortunate Carthaginians?

But no! there were some leading men who thirsted for more territory; and there was one old gentleman who hated Rome so bitterly that he took his three pretty little dark boys, Hannibal, Hasdrubal and Mago, to the altar of their gods, and made them swear a vow of hatred to Rome so long as they should live! He boasted, this old fellow (his name was Hamilcar *Barca*, or the 'Thunderer'), that he had trained up three "lion's whelps to prey on the Romans."

Hannibal, the eldest of these boys, never forgot that solemn scene at the altar. He grew up a splendid character, bold and wise, patient and strong. He was beautiful and fascinating, but he did not yield to the temptations which surrounded a powerful young prince; he studied hard and learned all that the Greeks had to teach. He was temperate and chaste; he became a great soldier, able to conquer by the sword, by stratagem or by terror. Like most men who become in love with *an idea*, his own life was noble. He had great genius, more than his brothers, perhaps; but he dearly loved them, and never forgot them. You must have read how he started from Carthage, with

his immense army, to go to Rome: ninety thousand foot soldiers and a lot of elephants, and his famous Numidian cavalry, great black men on great black horses. How splendid they must have been! How did he ever get them to Spain even? Much more, how did he get them across the Alps? We used to be told that he melted down the Alps with vinegar; but he was such a genius that perhaps he invented dynamite.

Well, Hannibal went on, and on, and on, and fought the Romans in those great battles at Trebia, Thrasymene, and at Cannæ. His Numidian horses had eaten up the corn, and had trampled down the vineyards, and had frightened the Romans nearly out of their wits. They thought the "*dire African*" was always at their gates. "*Hannibal ante portas*" became a proverb. Then he went down to a place called Capua, where, unluckily for him, he stopped. There his army drank too much wine and got demoralized. If he had gone home he would have done better. Even to-day, if a man wishes to speak of a place where his ruin began, he says, "That was my Capua." Here Hannibal stayed several years.

Alas for Rome! there was another of the “lion’s whelps” coming around by Spain and France and Switzerland, and over the Alps, to help Hannibal; and that was Hasdrubal, his brother. He had commanded the Punic forces (Punic means Carthaginian, and probably the word came from *Phœnician*, for Carthage, as you know, was settled by the Phœnicians, a wandering set of sailors) in Spain for a long time; but he did not have as good luck as Hannibal did. There was a long-headed old Roman, named Scipio, there, who gave him trouble, and he also had a great fight with a rival Carthaginian general named Hanno. But finally Hasdrubal outwitted Scipio, and got through the Pyrenees into France by one of the eastern passes. He made a splendid march with his elephants and his Spanish infantry and his African troops, right up into France, and there finding good quarters — it is where they make champagne now — he stayed all winter.

The next spring he thought he could march over the Alps, and he found the road his great brother Hannibal had made for himself eight years before. He had a much easier time getting over than Hannibal

had had, and reached northern Italy in great prosperity. The savage tribes who had fought Hannibal joined Hasdrubal, for they liked the idea of getting to that great city, Rome, of which they had heard, where they thought there was a great deal of plunder to be got. So Hasdrubal's army rolled up like a big snow-ball, and he gathered men and strength at every league. He crossed the river Po, and found the brave city of Placentia full of fight. Placentia kept him some time at bay.

Now just think of Rome with two of the "lion's whelps" on either side of her throat! Hannibal had never stopped harassing her. Here was Hasdrubal nearly arrived. What should she do? Six armies were levied for her defence. Seventy thousand Romans served in the fifteen legions, but they had been so drained and depleted by Hannibal that they could hardly call a large army into the field, and they had no money, very few military stores—they were at their wits' ends.

Now there was one man named Caius Claudius Nero, who had fought against these two terrible Carthaginians in Spain and Italy. You may be sure

he hated them. Then there was another cross old fellow, named Titus Livius, who hated everybody, even Nero. He, Livius, had been badly treated by Rome, he thought, so he was sulking down in the country on his farm when the dreadful news got to Rome that Hasdrubal was coming, sweeping all before him. The Senate sent for Livius (for they must have two consuls, one a Patrician and the other a Plebeian), and so they apologized to old Livius, and begged of him to put his own quarrel in his pocket and fight for Rome again, which he sulkily agreed to do. So he marched up against Hasdrubal, beyond the River Metaurus as far as the little town of Lena. The consul Nero was to go to the south to fight Hannibal. The two great brothers were only two hundred miles apart now, and Rome was between them !

Now just here consul Nero had an inspiration : he knew that neither he nor Livius was strong enough to fight either brother alone ; so he wheeled round without saying a word to anybody, and prepared to march to the north. He caught one of Hasdrubal's messengers with letters to Hannibal, as André was caught in the American war of independence, and he

determined, after reading that letter, that these two brothers should never meet. There was a law forbidding a consul to make war or to march his army beyond the limit of the province assigned to him; but Nero said "Pooh!" when he thought that by breaking that law he might save Rome. "I shall lose my head anyway," he probably said to himself, "but I will *save Rome*." He sent horsemen along the road to arouse the country people, telling them to have provisions and horses and carts and everything to help along, and so when his army came they found the farmers on the borders of the road, ready with meat and drink, and all the old farm-wagons and carts and horses, to pick up weary soldiers and to help them to march.

Consul Nero told his men that although this march was seemingly imprudent, it was really safe—this mighty project of his—for with his and their re-inforcement, Livius could probably beat Hasdrubal. And, indeed, this splendid march of the consul Nero was made amid the prayers and praises of his people. Food and drink and refreshment, joyful cheers and every encouragement, met this devoted band.

The soldiers caught the spirit of their leader, as soldiers always do; hence the proverb, "Better an army of deer led by a lion, than an army of lions led by a deer." Night and day they marched bravely on, resting only by relays in the wagons of the common people, and cheered by their help and sympathy.

Now if the consul Nero had failed, Rome would have failed to see how great he was; they would have blamed him. That is very unfair, for he would have been just as praiseworthy. He did not fail, however, as it happened. Nero reached Livius by night, and his men were received into the camp silently. No more tents were spread, no sign given to the enemy that a great re-inforcement had arrived. Nero was not like Fabius, an old general who always waited till day after to-morrow, or next week, before he would fight (so they always say now of those who love to postpone things, that they are practising the Fabian policy). No! Nero wanted to strike while the iron was hot. He had strong nerves, consul Nero! He was a better fellow than that Emperor Nero who came two or three centuries later.

So next morning the red ensign, which was the signal to prepare for immediate action, was run up in the Roman camp.

"Aha!" said Hasdrubal, "ready to fight, are you? And what did I hear this morning? *Your trumpets sounded twice!* There is an additional superior officer in the camp! Let me ride down and reconnoitre!"

And as the shrewd general did so, he saw that there were some poor tired horses there, and some soldiers whose armor was dull, rusty and stained.

"Forced marches! aha!" said the clever Carthaginian. "The two consuls are before me!" If Hasdrubal's action had been as quick as his wits, he would have beaten both of them.

But this sudden shock unnerved him. He lost heart and head, and fell back. He had not heard of that motto which Napoleon made famous several centuries later: "*Toutefois l'audace!*"

Here Hasdrubal was less great than Hannibal would have been.

At the first watch of the night Hasdrubal led his men silently out of the camp, and moved northward

toward the Metaurus, in the hope of placing that river between him and the Romans.

His guides betrayed him, and led him away from that part of the river which was fordable. Then the guides made their escape, but left the poor general and his army wandering along the steep bank, seeking in vain for a place to cross. When day dawned, Hasdrubal found that great numbers of his men in their fatigue and impatience had lost all discipline and subordination ; the Gallic auxiliaries were drunk, and the Numidian horsemen were furious. He could not retreat ; he must go back and give battle.

So, like a great general, which he was, he threw his Spanish infantry, armed with helmets and shields and short cut-and-thrust swords, forward ; and these, with his Carthaginians and Africans — he himself amongst them — formed the right wing. In the centre he placed his Ligurian infantry ; and on the left he placed the drunken Gauls, with long javelins and huge broadswords and targets ; and in front he sent his terrible colossal elephants with their Ethiopian guides, moving fortresses, dangerous to friend and foe,

He greatly outnumbered the Roman forces, and his Africans and Spaniards were stout soldiers and understood the Romans well. The Carthaginians' elephants gave great trouble; the consul Nero and his forces had to climb a steep bank, so that for a while it looked as if Hasdrubal was to win. Old Livius attacked the Spaniards "with a pious bravery," as Sir Walter Raleigh says in his fine old-fashioned English, but it had no immediate result; the Romans got dreadfully punished.

But here the consul Nero had another inspiration. He saw that this vast force, surprised, and at first endeavoring to retreat, were demoralized; there was confusion in the ranks; so instead of fighting on, allowing them to kill his best men, simply as desperate men will fight, he determined to defeat by tactics, or, as we should call it in other things, *cunning*. So he wheeled a brigade of his best men round the rear of the rest of the Roman army and fiercely charged the flank of his enemy. It was as successful as it was sudden. The Spaniards, the Ligurians, the Gauls and the Carthaginians rolled back in disorder, and, fighting gallantly to the last, were overwhelmed, and beaten.

Poor Hasdrubal ! he saw that the battle was lost, and he determined to die. He spurred his horse into the midst of a Roman cohort, and fell, pierced by a hundred swords.

Nero, with savage brutality, cut off his head, and sent it by a detachment of soldiers to Hannibal. They threw the bloody trophy into his camp.

Then Hannibal wept aloud. He had loved this brother, the playmate of his boyhood, this noble brother so much like himself. Ten years had passed since he had seen him. Year after year he had been waiting for him, and hoping to join with him in their great life-work of beating their hereditary enemy ; but when that beautiful head, with its crown of clustering black curls, that noble, pale face, bearing still on its sculptured features the agony of defeat, met his gaze, the great heart of Hannibal sank in his bosom, and he groaned aloud.

He continued to fight for the honor of his country, but he was never the same Hannibal. He was recalled 203 B. C. to Africa, which was now invaded by Scipio, the conqueror of Spain. He created a new cavalry and defeated Masinissa of Numidia,

but tried to induce Scipio to negotiate a peace.

But Scipio would not treat with Hannibal, and the latter was obliged to accept a battle at Zama, with his undisciplined hordes of Libians, Ligurians, Gauls, Macedonians and Carthaginians, who were unequal to the great disciplined army of the Romans.

As the war was waging, a sudden darkness overspread the heavens. "The great gods fight against me!" said the Carthaginian, throwing up his hands.

It was an eclipse of the sun, not then known, as it is now, to be one of the ordinary events of nature. These superstitions Carthaginians had a very curious and revolting sort of pagan worship; they believed in bad deities quite as much as in good ones, and this sudden darkness seemed to them the work of a demon. A panic seized upon them, and they fled.

Carthage accepted cruel and most humiliating terms from the Romans, but Hannibal escaped. He lived several years longer, and made an excellent Suffete, as they called him, or magistrate. His noble character induced him to abolish abuses, reform the laws, and to protect the rights of every citizen. He was one of the finest creatures who ever lived upon

earth, this man, but one of the most unfortunate. His very honesty made him unpopular, and he was obliged to fly a conspiracy of his own people. He took refuge with the treacherous king Prusias of Bithynia, who betrayed him to the Romans; but Hannibal, true to his oath, never to yield to a Roman, took poison and died.

The march of Nero, by which Rome was saved, was one of the grandest exploits of any military commander recorded in history; and yet he is scarcely known to us, except as the conqueror of the noble, picturesque and wonderful Carthaginians. It was not the triumph of one man, or one nation, however. It was the triumph of an *idea*. The Roman world was destined to live.

COLLATERAL READING.—Full accounts of all the characters mentioned in this paper may be found in Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography," and all good histories of Rome or Carthage tell the story of the Punic Wars.



CAIUS CLAUDIUS NERO.

VIII.—THE HAMMER OF THE GENTILES.

THREE is a story of a great peril and a great deliverance hidden away in history, which people have almost forgotten. Of all the struggles for freedom since the world began, it is one of the most exciting and important ; yet it seems like a riddle to ask about the Hammer of the Gentiles.

The story begins in the streets of Jerusalem, nearly two hundred years before Christ. Cruel soldiers are persecuting women and children and old men, murdering and selling for slaves the young and strong, offering every kind of insult to the sacred places and the Holy Temple. Then, soon, the scene changes to the mountains among a crowd of fugitives who have left lands and home and fled for their lives, preferring exile to breaking the laws of Moses and disobeying their God. Still the soldiers pursue them,

and it is their own king who gives the order for their destruction.

And now the story has a hero. He is the son of a venerable priest, Mattathias, and he is one of five brothers, all priests and all great men, but very different. John, the quiet eldest brother, sorrows most for the desecrated Temple, Simon talks of the glories and hopes of the Hebrew people, now almost driven from the face of the earth, Jonathan thinks of foreign nations who might help them, while Judas and Eleazar are fierce to fight for their country. But already it is easy to see which will be among the world's heroes, known to history as "The Hammer."

Those were the days when king Antiochus IV. ruled over Palestine and almost the whole East. One hundred and fifty years before, when Alexander the Great died, the wide Grecian Empire was broken into smaller kingdoms. Prosperous Egypt with its wonderful civilization made one; Greece itself was the least of them, and already was scarcely anything more than a province of Rome; but in the East, the kings of Syria had built up a great and flourishing and magnificent empire, with its capital at beautiful Antioch.

King Antiochus was a very great king and a very furious one, so that he was sometimes called Epiphanes, "the Brilliant," and sometimes Epimanes, "the Mad." He thought his great dominions could be governed more easily if all the different peoples had the same religion, and consequently determined that the whole country should be made as much like Greece as possible.

This was what caused so much trouble in Palestine. Great disturbances arose, so that at last Antiochus, in a fit of rage, sent a general named Apollonius with soldiers to force the Israelites to worship heathen gods. These soldiers broke down the splendid courts of the Temple, sacrificed on its altar the swine which are a particular abomination to the Jew, and poured swine's broth over the beautiful copies of the law. Worse than this, they tortured and killed multitudes who were ready to die rather than give up their religion.

This is what makes the story something more than merely interesting. The priests of Egypt, and the philosophers of the East, and the wise Socrates in Athens, had tried in vain to teach their countrymen

of one great God who is Creator and Ruler of the world, and who asks goodness and purity of His creatures ; but the Jews knew Him, worshipped Him, and believed that to obey Him is better than life. For just as we have learned law from the Romans, and still study art and literature in the schools of Greece, so our religion has come to us through the Hebrews. The Bible is the history of their nation, and from among them came Jesus. So when the King of Syria tried to destroy this nation and this religion, the struggle by which brave men saved both for the world is a very important part of history.

Mattathias and his remarkable sons opened the contest. After they were driven out of Jerusalem they retired to Modin, a little city in the beautiful Judæan uplands, near Hebron. Here their family had been great for so many generations that their very name, "Asmoneans," meant *Magnates*, and always it had been a family of priests sworn to believe in God and help others to worship him. They could not forget this, and as they read in the book of Daniel (which was first known in those trying times) the stories of men who would not deny the Lord Jehovah,

though tempted and persecuted, and the records of the visions of better times to come, they remembered that to be great is to have much influence over others.

The Syrian officer who planted a heathen altar in Modin did not forget this either, and begged Mattathias to offer a sacrifice thereon, that the rest of the people might follow the example. The indignation of the old man arose at such a suggestion, and grew until it knew no bounds. When a Jew who wanted to get favor with the officer crowded up to the altar bringing an offering, Mattathias could endure it no longer. He cried out, "Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, and give consent to his commandments, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers."

Thereupon he and his sons fell upon the officer and killed him, tore down the altar, and then fled for their lives to the mountains, gathering together there numbers who were like-minded.

The Syrians followed hard after, and, mindful of past experiences, attacked one company on the Sab-

bath, only to be received in silence by men who could die rather than disobey their law. Then Mattathias, as wise as he was brave, declared that the Sabbath was for man's highest need, and that, fighting as they were for their nation and their God, they might defend themselves on that day.

His followers soon became a large and powerful band up in the mountains, tearing down many heathen altars, restoring Jewish rites, and delivering numbers of their persecuted brethren.

Mattathias lived a year only after this ; but dying he bequeathed the righteous warfare to his sons. The struggle became the particular inheritance of Judas, who began then to be called Maccabeus, which means "The Hammer." Familiar with the mountains all his life, he struck blow after blow, sudden and heavy, upon the Syrian hosts, who did not know the country and were much confused by the steep roads and rough passes.

Young Judas was the idol of his army. "Mighty and strong from his youth up, there was a cheerfulness diffused through the whole army when he appeared. His countrymen delighted to remember his

stately appearance as of an ancient giant, when he fastened on his breastplate, or tightened his military sash around him, or waved his protecting sword over the camp of his faithful followers." Like a lion for courage, he was tender and gentle "to such as were ready to perish;" and though a great general, he remembered that he was also a priest. "For our lives and our laws," was his own motto and the war-cry of his army; and he never forgot that "the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of a host, but strength cometh from heaven." All the liberty in the world has come from men with such courage and trust. The famous saying that "God is on the side of the heaviest battalions" comes from tyrants like Napoleon, who delighted to use it, or like the Roman emperors of whom it was first spoken.

In the first two years Judas had won three great battles. Near Samaria he had destroyed a large army, and killed Apollonius himself. He took the sword of the Syrian general, and with it fought all his life, doubtless often gaining courage as he looked at it and thought of his first battle and the miserable end of the man who had so persecuted the Jews. At

Beth Horon in the mountains, he utterly destroyed another great host, and killed their leader, the governor of the whole province.

By this time the Syrians had begun to have some respect for the Jewish army, and the third time they sent to Emmaus nearly fifty thousand men under three of their greatest generals. Perhaps Judas never showed the strength of his character more than at this time. Although he had but six thousand men to oppose this multitude, he did not hesitate to follow the law of Moses, and proclaim that all who were lately married, or had just bought property, and all others who were afraid, should leave the army! Just half his force deserted him, and against the host of his enemies he could array but a poorly armed band of three thousand men; but they were brave men who had fasted and prayed, and who believed it was better to die in battle than to see the calamities of their people and sanctuary.

Partly by stratagem, and partly by the splendid courage of his small troop, Judas scattered the great army of the Syrians, who left behind much gold and silver, and blue silk and purple of the sea. Well

might the happy Israelites chant their national anthem of thanksgiving, the one hundred and thirty-sixth psalm.

But Jerusalem was still in heathen hands ; and the next year King Antiochus sent for its defence still another enormous army under the governor of all Syria. Once more the Syrian host was utterly defeated, this time at Beth Zur, about thirty miles south of the city ; and Judas and his victorious followers marched into Jerusalem with songs and shouts. His first care was the Temple. He pulled down the hateful Syrian altars, rooted up the shrubs that filled its courts, rebuilt its walls and hung them with the splendid spoil of the heathen, and with pious care rededicated the altars to Jehovah. With great rejoicings and solemn ceremonies the Israelites set up again the worship for which they had endured so much and fought so bravely ; and then for the first time celebrated with illuminations and festive dances the beautiful "Feast of Lights," often celebrated afterwards under different circumstances.

Judaea was not yet safe and at peace, however ; for now Judas and his brethren had to meet and conquer

the neighboring tribes ; and when in 164 B. C., King Antiochus died leaving two sons who quarrelled over the throne, there were fresh battles to fight with the armies of the new king, also called Antiochus. This time it was determined to crush once and forever the Jewish army.

Down the Jordan valley towards Jerusalem marched the Syrian host. It was a splendid army of more than one hundred and twenty thousand men. The horsemen were in chain armor, with helmets of polished brass, and "when the sun shone upon the shields of brass and gold, the mountains glistened therewith, and shined like lamps of fire." Most terrible of all, in the midst tramped magnificently caparisoned elephants, each with its Indian driver, carrying huge black towers full of archers, and roused to fury with the blood of grapes and of mulberries !

The armies met near Beth Zur again. The Jews fought like tigers. The brave Eleazar, thinking that the largest elephant carried the king, determined, like Curtius or Horatius, that his life was a small price to pay for the salvation of a whole people. He ran under the dreadful creature, stabbed it furiously,

and was crushed as the huge beast tottered and fell. It was this deed that made so honorable his curious title of the "Beast-sticker."

Notwithstanding all their daring, the Jews had to give way for the first time when Judas himself led the fight, and Jerusalem was given up. Though the people were protected by a treaty, the Syrian general broke it as soon as he was inside the walls, and it seemed for a little while as if all was lost.

Before the year was out, however, the throne of Syria was in new hands, and against King Demetrius the Maccabees (as Judas and his brothers were called) set out on a campaign which proved sometimes disastrous, sometimes successful.

One Nicanor, a great Syrian, met Judas in a council, and liked him so much that they became close friends. During this friendship occurred almost the only quiet time in the whole life of Judas. It is pleasant to think of him enjoying the comfort and happiness of the home he made for himself in these days, bearing with dignity his short-lived honors as High Priest, and constantly delighting in the society of the congenial Nicanor.

Such a friendship could not last, and circumstances quickly brought it to an end ; for soon after, we find this very general again fighting the Jews most fiercely, but in vain, and at last lying slain among his defeated soldiers.

Judas was something more than a brave warrior ; he was also a thoughtful ruler. He had heard much of a wonderful people called Romans who were fast conquering the whole world, and to whom the mighty Syrians themselves paid tribute. These Romans, Judas had heard, were ruled by a senate chosen from among themselves, and by "a captain changed every year." He had heard too that the favor of this powerful people set up thrones, and their anger overthrew kingdoms ; so he determined to send an embassy asking their aid.

For many reasons the Romans gladly granted their protection ; and though Judas himself did not profit by it, his country did for a time ; and thus began the connection afterwards so disastrous to the Jews.

Meanwhile, in the year 161 b. c., so many quarrels had arisen among the Jewish people themselves that

when a fresh army came down from the Syrian king under a general named Bacchides, there were only eight hundred men who were willing to follow Judas to battle. Still his courage did not fail; and rallying the little band, he led them forth with these brave words: "If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our honor;" and it was given him thus to die; for before the day was over, the battle was lost, and among the slain was the great and wise and able leader.

There was cause for the lamentation that filled Israel. There had been no such leader since David; there was never such another. With a handful of followers, Judas Maccabeus had defied a mighty kingdom, had rescued a whole land, had rebuilt a nation, and had restored a dying religion. All this he had done by his wisdom and skill and military ability, by his high purpose and his sublime trust in a God who cares for his people. And to-day when men wish to honor a hero, they greet him with the triumphant music in which the great composer, Handel, afterward celebrated the deeds of this very Judas:

*"See, the conquering hero comes!
Sound the trumpet beat the drums,
Sports prepare, the laurels bring,
Songs of triumph to him sing!"*

After his death the struggle went on. Jonathan, called "the Crafty," the youngest of the Maccabees, gained by able management, as well as by military skill and great courage, more than had been lost; and he was soon reigning as High Priest and "Friend of the King" over his whole country. It was a very warlike reign, however, and soon came to an end.

Simon, the last brother of this wonderful Macca-bean family, succeeded in 143 B. C. to the power over the Hebrew people. He was, on the whole, probably the most remarkable of this family who fought so well for national liberty. In a few great battles he subdued three fortresses that none of his brothers had been able to secure, and thereby made himself master of Judæa. He ruled with a wise and firm hand; peace and plenty filled the whole land. The young princes rode forth in the splendid train of embassies to foreign courts, and dreamt of a day when the Jewish people should be rulers of the

earth. The Hebrew maidens hurried to their latticed windows as the gorgeous trains of foreign kings filled the streets of Jerusalem going up to the stately palace of the High Priest. The hum of buying and selling rose all day, and the money, for the first time in their history, was Jewish money marked with the name of a Jewish ruler. Old men talked together at the street corners of the new wealth of the country, and nodded with satisfaction that no more tribute was paid to Syria. And in quiet chambers priests and scholars gathered up their sacred writings into almost the very form in which to-day we read the Old Testament. Since the magnificent reign of Solomon, it was the day of Israel's greatest glory and greatest development. The nation, with the priceless treasure of its religion, had at last been saved for the world, by the courage and devotion of Judas Maccabeus and his brethren.

IX.—IN THE GERMAN WOODS LONG AGO.

I WAS about to say that the story that I shall tell you of what happened in the German woods long ago is sort of bridge between the first Christmas and the great Magna Charta, but I shall not say so. Yet, if you will keep the first Christmas and the Magna Charta in mind, it will help you to remember the story. The first Christmas was the day on which our Saviour was born. It seems as if it ought to have been the year ONE, but the almanac-makers have made a mistake in some way, and we cannot tell in what year the great event occurred. It was probably earlier than the almanac would have us think.

However, at the time when the angels sang their song of good-will to men on the plains of Palestine there was a little boy in the city of Rome who had been taken from the wild woods of Germany by the

Roman army, and was getting his education as a citizen of the great nation. The Romans called him Arminius, but he had been named Hermann by his mother, and he did not let the fact that the conquerors of his people gave him a new name cause him to forget that he was a German and not a Roman.

We can imagine him, as he studied his Latin lessons, thinking of the language of his mother, and of his old home and life of freedom where the liberty-loving people dwelt to whom he was proud to belong.

He was not alone in Rome, for one of his brothers was there also, and the Romans were trying to make both of them forget that they were Germans. With the brother they succeeded. He took a Roman name, and would have nothing to do with Hermann in planning to get freedom for the German people. Years afterwards, the two brothers at the heads of great armies, were often opposed in battle.

Hermann studied history in Rome. I think there can be no doubt of that. He learned how the

Romans had conquered many nations, how in spite of the bravery of the people there, they had obtained the mastery in Gaul, as the territory which is now France was then called. He knew it was the great Julius Cæsar who had conquered Gaul; but as he read further, he found that Cæsar was one of a "triumvirate," or government of three men, of whom one was Crassus, whose experience in trying to conquer other peoples was not like Cæsar's. It strikes me that Hermann found some comfort in reading the story of how Crassus tried to overcome the Parthians on the plains of Mesopotamia, and how he was himself overthrown and killed, and his whole great army lost. This had happened when Hermann's father was a boy; and there must have been old men in Rome able to repeat the stories of the deeds of Crassus, who was the richest man in the city, and perhaps some who told Hermann all about the terrible defeat of the army by the "barbarians."

Perhaps he looked on some rough map and found that Parthia was away off among the mountains on the Caspian Sea. He knew that this people had been the most successful in resisting the encroach-

ments of the Romans, and that when they had fought it had been for their freedom.

I imagine that he said to himself : "What has been done can be done ! The Parthians have overcome the Romans, why cannot the Germans do the same ? "

On the other hand, doubtless, he weighed the odds against him as he recalled the success of the other triumvirs, and especially the story of Pompey's conquest of the great King of Pontus, Mithridates. He must have thought of the failure of Hannibal, as well as of the long line of opponents of Rome, who had fallen by turn before her victorious chariot wheels.

Hermann was not the sort of person who unthinkingly rushes to a conclusion. But he thought long of how much his people loved freedom, how they had once been free, and at last he made up his mind that they should be free again.

The patriotic young student saw too the great difference between the Germans and the Romans. The one lived in cities, surrounded with every sort of luxury—they were gay and pleasure-loving. Every kind of dissipation abounded, and it was plain that

the Roman people were not growing stronger, and that they would only grow weaker unless they dropped some of their bad habits. He looked to the green woods of his home. He saw a people active, full of bounding health, who loved liberty so much as to be unwilling to live in cities or even villages. They loved nature, too, and, next to war, their favorite occupation was hunting. Among them, as a Roman writer has said, "no one smiled at vice;" and it was not "fashionable" to do wrong, as it was at Rome.

Another great difference that Hermann noticed between his people and those around him at Rome was in the treatment that the women received. Marriage with the Germans was a holy thing. The men loved their wives and children; home was a place sacred to the sweet enjoyments that have made it so beautiful among their descendants ever since. When they were married, the man made presents to the bride and any wrong done to her roused in the husband's heart the direst desire for vengeance. Already the Roman generals had treated the Germans' wives and daughters in a way that stung their husbands and

fathers to the quick. The lines of one of the great English writers express this feeling well. He says, (altering but a word),

“Leave to the poor barbarian his single tie to life.
The sweet, sweet love of daughter, of sister and of wife,
The gentle speech, the balm for all that his vexed soul endures,
The kiss in which he half forgets even such a yoke as yours.
Spare us the inexpiable wrong, the unutterable shame,
That turns the coward’s heart to steel, the sluggard’s blood to
flame;
Lest when our latest hope is fled ye taste of our despair,
And learn by proof, in some wild hour, how much the wretched
dare.”

It was when Hermann was about six years old that the Romans had made their first inroads upon the territory of the Germans, led by a general named Drusus, and it may be that the little fellow had been taken to Rome at that time. Drusus built many forts on the Rhine, and, I suppose, thought that he had conquered the people. It is said that once while he was there, a supernatural figure appeared to him, and with a lofty, threatening air, said, “How much further wilt thou advance, insatiable Drusus? The Fates forbid thee to advance! away! The

term of thy deeds and of thy life is at hand!"

Whatever Drusus thought of this apparition, true it is that he did not advance further, but soon after, while retreating, fell from his horse and died.

It is said that on his retreat, wolves howled around his camp, the wild screams of women were heard, and the stars raced about the sky! To the minds of superstitious people these were frightful omens. He was succeeded by his awful and arrogant brother, Tiberius, who afterwards became emperor of Rome.

Under Tiberius the condition of the Germans did not grow much worse.

When he returned to Rome, a general named Varus was sent to take his place. He had been among the conquered people of Syria, and thought that he could govern the Germans as he governed them. But there was none of the German love of liberty among the Syrians, and Varus soon found that he had made a mistake. Under Tiberius the Germans had been comparatively quiet, waiting, as it proved, a leader to rise and give them freedom. Now they were irritated and ready, and now too a

leader was ready to show them the way to throw off the galling yoke.

You are ready to say that it was Hermann who was to do the heroic deed. He had been trained by the Romans to lead his own countrymen in wars for their conquerors, but he could not be made to forget the interests of the German people. He showed them that by uniting their forces they might resist a people even so powerful as the Romans. He found that they were prepared to strike a great blow for deliverance. Hermann knew that if he were to attack the well-armed and carefully drilled soldiers of Rome in the open field, he would have little chance of success. He determined to lead Varus into the wild forests, where numbers and strength of body would be a match for skill and arms. He therefore caused the people of a distant place to open the war by revolting against the invaders, and made his plans to attack Varus when he should have marched beyond his forts, in some thick woods among the mountains.

Varus was as confident of success as the Romans generally had been, and fearlessly marched to his

ruin. If you will look on a map of Germany, you will see a town named Detmold, about fifty miles southwest of Hanover. It is among the rugged mountains known as the Teutoburger Alps. The country is full of narrow valleys, surrounded by lofty hills, which, at the time we are speaking of were covered with great trees. It was to this region that Hermann enticed Varus, and at a point near the town of Detmold the Romans met the Germans. Varus had with him about fourteen thousand infantry from Rome, nearly a thousand Roman horsemen, and a large number of soldiers that he had gathered from the provinces. These were well organized. They had brave and skilful officers, and the heavy armor that you have seen in the pictures of Roman soldiers.

There were no roads through the woods, and Varus was obliged to cut down trees and fill up swampy places in order to get his army along. Then, almost before he knew it, he found himself in a trap. The valleys were large enough, but they were entered by narrow defiles, through which but few could pass at a time. Hermann and his army knew

the way about the region, and they were there before the Romans, cutting down trees to impede their progress, and harassing them from the tops of the hills. Heavy rains had fallen, and it kept raining, until Varus thought it would never stop. This made his progress in any direction very difficult, even when he had no enemy striking his men down with arrows that seemed to come from the clouds, or to be shot out of the very hills themselves. He had also made the mistake of carrying into the woods his heavy baggage wagons, and of letting a great rabble of camp-followers go along, just as if he were travelling through a friendly country, or taking an excursion to exercise his men.

Hermann would not let his brave desperate Germans go out to meet the Romans in any open place, but held to his plan of secrecy and artifice until he saw that the Romans were tired out, and were leaving their heavy wagons, and getting into such confusion that they could not even hear the commands of their officers. Then he ordered his men to charge upon the worn-out foreigners. With shouts and fury the Germans sprang through the gloomy woods, firing

their terrible arrows at men, but especially at the horses of the Roman cavalry.

We pitied the Germans at first, but now we pity the poor lost Romans. They were not fighting for their homes but only because their general told them to do it. Varus soon saw that there was no possibility of his getting ahead, and ordered his men to start back. They did as they were told, but still they fought. They were separated one from another. The Germans surrounded the small bands and slaughtered them. They were lost in the swamps. Their eagles were taken. All hope left them, and they saw that there was no escape. One little body of veterans formed themselves in a ring on a mound, and determined to sell life as dearly as they could; but it was of no use. They tried to raise a protecting earth-work and to make a ditch, but they were worn out by fatigue and pained by their wounds. Inch by inch they were obliged to give way, and the Germans charged on them, killing all that they did not reserve to be offered as sacrifices. Very few of the proud army of Rome escaped to tell the story of the fight in the German woods. Varus cast himself upon his

sword and died. But the news was taken to Rome, and the emperor and all his people received it with terror. Tiberius, who had called himself Augustus, "the majestic," tore his clothes in his agony, and pitifully cried out,

"Give me my legions, Varus!"

But the legions could never be given him.

The horrified Romans declared that the summits of the Alps fell at this time, and that columns of fire blazed from them; that the temple of the God of war in Rome was struck by a thunderbolt; that the heavens glowed as if on fire; that comets blazed forth, and meteors like spears shot from the north into the Roman camp; that the statue of victory which had been erected on the frontier, pointing towards Germany, had of its own accord turned around and pointed towards Rome.

It sounds very much like what we read in Shakespeare's play of Julius Cæsar:

"Graves have yawned and yielded up their dead;
Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the capitol;
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,

Horses did neigh and dying men did groan,
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets."

It was believed that the victorious Germans would march upon Rome, and there was consternation on this account. A great force was raised by draft, for no one of the military age was willing to enlist to face a foe so terrible as the Germans were represented to be by the frightened refugees who had brought the news to the city.

But the Germans did not march to Rome. Hermann fought for freedom, not for conquest as the Romans did. He obtained what he fought for. If you look at a map of the ancient Roman Empire, you will see that it did not extend beyond the Rhine.

Hermann put a stop to Roman progress in that direction for all time. He won freedom for the Germans and their descendants, and put that spirit into them which caused them, on the Meadow of Counsel, to force King John to sign the Magna Charta; which caused them at Philadelphia, in 1776, to sign the Declaration of Independence, and on many another memorable occasion to make a firm stand for constitutional freedom. You know, I suppose, that the

English came to England from the region of country in which Hermann won freedom. It was *our* ancestors, then, who gained the victory over Rome in the German woods long ago. It was *our* ancestors, too, who gained the Magna Charta twelve hundred years afterwards, fought many a bloody as well as bloodless battle in the cause of freedom since, and gave a new utterance to the determination of old Hermann that his blood should not flow in the veins of any but the free.

Note — In connection with this story you will find it interesting to look over Kohlrausch's "History of Germany," Chapter I; Sir Edward Creasy's "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the world," and Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology and Biography," articles Arminius, Drusus, Crassus and Varus.

If you ever visit Germany, you will be interested to go to Detmold. On the summit of the Grotenberg, the culminating point of the Teutoburger Alps, you may see a great statue of hammered copper, forty-five feet high, standing on a circular pedestal of stone ninety feet high, erected by the Princes of Germany to the memory of Hermann. Remember if you see it, that it commemorates *our* Hermann. He does not belong to the German princes or people alone.

X.—THE BARBARIAN'S OVERTHROW.

ATTILA had received a summons, as he sat in his wooden village in Hungary, from Genseric, the Vandal of Africa, to join him, like a good fellow, in a war with the Visigoths, the daughter of whose king Genseric had cruelly treated; and the Vandal knew he should be duly punished if he waited for the furious father to attack him. The king of the Huns, a vast combination of wild tribes, had already so many reasons for marching upon Gaul, and Italy, and Greece, on account of snubs received from the Romans who were established in these three countries, that Genseric's request for help seemed like the very last step up the mountain; and Attila gave orders that his hordes should spring to arms.

Now the Romans and the Visigoths were Christians, and the Huns and the Vandals were heathens.

So, above the hates and ambitions of the two opposing armies which were to meet in the approaching battle, were the invisible but important combatants, Christianity and Heathenism, each fighting for the dominion of the world.

The Huns were grasping. What they wanted to fight for was plunder, and they would even ally themselves with former enemies for the prospect of gain, and the opportunity of imitating the luxurious living of the Romans. It speaks ill for luxuries that in order to obtain them, a people of as fine traits as the Huns could be induced to be false and cruel. In peace, Attila's tribes were capable of gentleness and generosity, and they were in courage and honest pride the superiors of the Romans of this period. To make sure of plenty of work, Attila sent a demand to Rome for the hand in marriage of Honoria, a beautiful princess of great majesty. The king of the Huns knew he would never get a Christian of such standing to wife; but he delighted in scoffing at the Romans, whom he feared no more than a parcel of plump sheep stripped of their wool by the thorns of the hedgerows as they snip clover.

"Honoria or war!" said Attila.

And the Romans, with the General Aëtius at their head, answered, "War, miserable Hun!"

Now the Visigoths were on the point of war with the Romans when Genseric sent back the Gothic princess to her father, deprived of her nose and ears for supposed treachery. It was not a nice time to fight Genseric, thought Theodoric, the king of the Visigoths; and he put on — being a good Christian — sackcloth and ashes as an expression of his dependence upon the Deity, whose counsel he hoped to obtain in this dilemma. Aëtius bore down upon him with the Roman army and its allies (the latter made up of long-conquered members of the tribes of Attila's people and other folk), and the first thing Theodoric knew, there was the enemy just before him. Theodoric no doubt peeped through the opening of his tent door, with the ashes on his gray head, for he was very old.

"Pshaw!" cried Aëtius, rosy and sparkling with exercise, and a sense of humor; "I've given up chastising you for taking Roman room in Gaul, Theodoric, because Attila our common foe, is at hand."

Knock off your ashes, sheathe your sword in friendship, as I do, and call your Goths to this new business."

But Theodoric only shook his wise old head, and withdrew into his tent, and the Romans were obliged to hunt up a very sagacious person, by name Avitus, to come and talk reason into the pious ears of the Visigoth. He was really brave, as an old king should be, but he preferred to await Attila's possible attack upon his provinces, and run the chance of sparing his handsome men — tall, blue-eyed and fair-haired — and, moreover, his two noble sons, Torismond and Theodoric, whose royal blood entitled them to the long flowing locks of Gothic princes. However, Avitus drew so well before the mind of the old king the picture of Attila and his Huns rampant over Gaul, and even Italy, unless every king bestirred himself to thwart the barbarian ; and the army of the Goths was kindled to such anger by being reminded of past insults in the old days when Huns meanly stole the wives and children of their ancestors without coming to open war ; and the Romans argued so well that it was the duty of every Christian to defend the holy

churches from destruction by the heathen, that each Visigoth's blood was hotly stirred, and Theodoric himself hurried to crush Attila before he had stepped with his haughty, lion-like tread upon too many cities in Gaul.

It was in A. D. 451 that Attila, proceeding westward to the Hercynian forest, crossed the Rhine on rafts made of its timber, and fiercely rolled his eyes (a way he had) at the tempting gardens of Gaul. Everything from that moment bowed before the cavalry of the Huns or Scythians, who were a little less terrible as admitted conquerors than as resisted foes ; but during a war, when their blood was once up, they were horrid, however you might take them. Attila was called a generous man, leaning towards mercy ; but he lived in an age when even the Christian Romans were often wicked ; and, not long before, even priests could sacrifice human victims in the hope of saving a city ; so he and his tribes were guilty of dreadful massacres, and recalled to people's minds the military towers which aforetime the Huns had constructed out of the skulls of seventy thousand enemies ; and, ages back, of the one hundred thousand

Indian prisoners whom Timurlane, the Tartar, had killed upon the spot as they stood among their captors, because they had smiled, with a flash of innumerable eyes and lips, at the approach of an army of their own countrymen !

But when Attila arrived before the walls of Orleans he received a check. Bishop Anianus of Orleans encouraged the citizens to resist the besiegers, to pray, and to trust to the deliverance which God might send through Aëtius. He placed a messenger by the wall to look out upon the horizon, sure that the friendly army would appear. Twice the sentinel sprang to the bishop's side, pale and eager-eyed with the appalling information that the horizon was clear and immovable as the rim of a shield. A third time the bishop sent him in trust and hope; and as he looked he saw a stir as of dust raised by a hurricane. "Gaze well and truly!" exclaimed the holy protector of Orleans. Ah! now the messenger sprang back once more to the bishop, and glancing down upon the prostrate praying people around him, cried, "The dust grows to an army!" Anianus, too, cried out, "It is the aid of God!" and through the air on

every side rose from the still prostrate people a deep sigh, "The aid of God!" As Attila's warriors were in the act of mounting the breaches they had made, the spears of the united armies of Aëtius and Theodoric, thrilling in the daylight, approached.

Attila, being a sagacious leader, perceived the danger of defeat in the midst of Gaul, and he therefore commanded his savage forces to retreat in haste across the neighboring Seine. Beyond, in the direction of Rheims, the plains of Chalons promised a smooth field for his undulating cavalry, the pride of the Huns. The Romans followed, and the far-reaching fields of Chalons were filled with surging multitudes of men. The Huns quailed and held back. Bitter was the wide-ruling Attila's taste of life for the few moments while he sought to gather every power within him to inspire his host. He was amused to defeat. When first made king he had ridden with his brother, Bleda, proudly into the Eastern Empire of the Romans, and demanded large tributes and covenants without so much as deigning to dismount from his living throne. The gorgeous Romans had then given way to his lordliness, though

his steed wore no gayly sparkling trappings like those around him, and though Attila arrayed himself in simple garments of one color, in contrast to the handsome gear of his own allies. His small, deep-set eyes, we are told, were so full of lustre that it was difficult to meet them; which is often the case with the eyes of greatly gifted men.

Immovable in grief as well as in the midst of the laughable antics of Hunnish amusements, it is not to be supposed that the plains of Chalons felt the angry tears of Attila that day; but we know that he stood before his people and gave them a brave oration, exhorting them to war.

Suddenly the brows of Attila's subject-kings lift themselves from their moody darkness, and they and all the Scythians, clutching their sturdy cross-bows, strike their foreheads with the right hand, and then twang their bowstrings in martial rhythm. The sound is that of the wind before a storm which is coming to sweep itself over a Scythian desert. Attila's savage lip moves with pride and returning hope, and his eyes flame like lightning. A young king, or a sooth-sayer perhaps, speaks while the bowstrings gradually .

sink to slumber again, telling of the sacred sword of the Hunnish God of Battle, which was discovered in a field where it had long been buried, awaiting the young Attila's coming to be the head of his people; and it was told again how Attila possessed the magic stone GEZI, from which could come, if it were held in the king's hand, tempests of such power that foes would be swept away.

The Goths and Romans meantime were securing advantageous positions from which to attack the Huns, young Torismond seizing the only eminence of importance on the plains. The armies of the Christians were more resplendent than that of the Barbarian; chariots were doubtless drawn up in princely lines and massive awfulness; and archers bounded hither and thither, ready to band themselves together for the onslaught, while on parts of the field fighting had continued uninterruptedly all the while. It was July, and the sun had rolled up the heavens betimes to witness the tremendous scene from the best point of view. Many a jewelled shield and belt and horse's head-gear glittered over the country meads in the sunbeams, and at last Huns

and Romans mingled in an enormous tussle, in which hundreds of thousands of warriors fell. But the Huns were overcome.

Old Theodoric was nobly dead, killed while encouraging his forces; and at the end of the day, when the Goths drew up into a hot, rejoicing, triumphant mass, they clashed their swords upon their shields, lightly tossed upon the raised bucklers of a group of Visigoths, Torismond, the young and brave hero, and proclaimed him the successor of his father. The graceful prince stood high in air upon his breathing pedestal of warriors with uplifted arms, and the setting sun touched his figure with gold, and the golden circlet upon his long golden hair with light, and filled his blue eyes with sparks of fire. Christianity was stronger from that hour.

Having retreated behind the wagons of their camp, the Huns pressed together exhausted. But in order to be prepared in kingly fashion for the worst, that is, a further attack from the enemy, the imperious Attila caused to be prepared, of saddles and wagons, a massive funeral pile, whereon he and his family and the accumulated spoils of his campaign were

to be consumed, rather than suffer capture. No doubt he watched the building of the pyre, sitting like a disappointed statue among those of his subject-kings who were left to him; while by his orders the Hunnish music sounded continual defiance to the enemy, and all sallies from outside the camp were met with showers of arrows.

At fall of night the roaring Gothic trumpet ceased to ring around the plains; the tramping steeds of the Romans were still; Attila marvelled at the vast silence on every side. Though defeated, he saw himself master of the battle-field by the light of the stars; for the Christian host had left him alone with his heathen sword, and a warning never to return to Gaul. The Franks, keeping watch at a safe distance, kindled innumerable fires at night in imitation of larger forces: and Attila, puzzled by the clever tactics of Aetius, gathered up his broken army and faced home.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING.—There is an account of the battle of Chalons in White's *Eighteen Christian Centuries*, and in Creasy's *"Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World."* Gibbon's account of the battle in his *"Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,"* is noted as one of the most splendid pictures of that remarkable work.

XI.—THE HAMMER OF THE SARACENS.

IN the month of October, it being the year of our Lord 732, a Frankish lad s'pped out of the city of Tours, and took his way toward the encampment which protected it. A rolling meadow-like country lay around him, touched with russet shades; a belt of trees on a swell had not yet lost their leaves, and these were flaming yellow and scarlet. The air did not lack that haze which makes autumn landscapes the most beautiful pictures that our good earth shows us. This boy snuffed the air with delight; he had recently known what it was to be pent within the walls of a besieged city. But he cared very little about the landscape. The colors in the distant Saracen camp were more commanding to his eye. He could see the crescent on the Saracen flags, and groups of those horsemen, with turbans

on their heads, and cimeters at their sides, who had slashed their way through Gaul, and were at this moment threatening the destruction of Tours and all the Christian North.

When the lad approached the outskirts of the Frankish camp, he was halted and his message demanded of him.

"I come to my father," he replied, flushing before the big-limbed soldier who questioned him, and wishing he were old enough to carry such a spear in these wars. "He is Cedric, a captain near Duke Charles,"

"Yonder are the tents of the duke's officers."

The boy approached the tents, seeing around him everywhere preparations for battle. The two armies had lain seven days facing each other, with the plain between them on which they must soon close with a shock, one overcoming the other. He slipped his hand timidly into the mailed hand of a man who stood talking with others similarly covered. Their helmets and the metal plates on their bodies made sheens of light in the setting sun. The hand of a woman or a youth could scarcely lift the suits of

armor worn by heroes in battles which depended less on the manœuvring of generals than on the hand-to-hand courage of individual men.

"Cedric, my son," said the officer, turning aside, as if half annoyed to see the boy there, "what message does your mother send?"

"None, father."

"Then why are you here?"

The boy patted his father's gauntlet.

"Then why are you here?" repeated the captain.

"To hear the clank of armor."

His father was not displeased, and one of the officers in the group smiled.

"The Moslems will scarcely override us," said this officer, "while even the children have such a stomach for the field."

Young Cedric wanted to say he was no child, but full thirteen years of age, and large for his years; that he had sometimes tried his father's helmet on, and would love to buckle a breastplate over his tunic, and take at least a spear in his hand. But who could speak up to such mighty men without meriting a rebuke for boldness?

"Go into the tent to Gerome," said the father. "Presently, before the sun has set, I will dismiss you again to your mother with messages."

Young Cedric entered the tent, where he found his father's old servant busy with arms.

He was obliged to tell the old man how and why he came, and to confess that nobody attended him.

"There will be a hue and cry after you in the household, young master," said Gerome, "and I shall have to take you back to the city gates for your pains, unless you want yon Moslem horsemen to carry you off, or stoop from their saddles to slice you with their cimeters."

"Think not that I fear any Moslem horsemen, Gerome," replied the boy, seating himself on a goat-skin, while he watched the old man burnish a helmet. "I wish that piece were intended to cover my head, and that battle-axe were for my hand."

"Hear the lad! And only of late these infidels were tearing like tigers at our walls. You know nothing of that Moslem leader, Abderrahman. The cimeters of his hosts have prevailed all through lower Gaul. He defeated and slew Count Eudo at

the River Garonne. Mighty and strong are those turbaned hordes. They do tell that his Berber cavalry are officered by Arabs whom nothing can turn back."

"They have not yet met our Duke Charles," said the boy. "Are the Saracens such men of limb as the Franks? Besides, they fight against our Christian faith; and will God allow them to prevail?"

"I don't know," replied the old soldier; "it's generally the strongest that prevails in battle, faith or no faith. These infidels will bring their Koran and their prophet, and thrust them down our throats whether we will or not, if Abderrahman overthrows our duke."

"I never would submit to that," said the boy.

"The issue of the battle must prove that," commented Gerome, grimly. "Yonder host is loaded with treasure that they have pillaged from this groaning land. They bring their women and children to plant on our hearthstones. Young master," said the old soldier, straightening himself and lifting an impressive finger, "even a carl like me can discern that we must conquer to-morrow, or the Saracens become our masters forever."

Young Cedric's father now appeared at the tent door and bade Gerome conduct his son back to Tours, and charged the boy with many messages to his mother. He held the young face between his mailed hands, and looked at it attentively. The boy pleaded to remain until morning.

"Bestow me anywhere, father. Or let me carry a spear all night."

"There are women and children in the Moslem camp," said his father. "We Franks must put our stakes behind our backs while we fight."

"If you send me from you I will try to escape again in the morning, father. There is my brother to have charge of our mother. Let me remain with you."

Young Cedric's father gave no assent, only smiling on his son, and seeming inclined to wait for this boyish ardor to cool.

"Have a care over him, Gerome," he said, turning away. "Later he returns."

Later the camp-fires blazed and sentries kept guard. To young Cedric the hours had wings. His father came late to the tent and threw himself down

for a brief rest. Early next morning the lines of the opposing armies were formed.

Cedric the captain half forgot his son, until he found the boy by his left hand, and dismissed him to the rear with a sternness that brooked no hesitation.

At the rear of the Frankish army, on a little knoll which gave him a commanding view of the whole field, this boy saw fought that decisive battle of Tours which was to complete or defeat the triumph of the Moslem faith. He realized that home and life depended upon the issue; and he had long heard his mother tell of the cruelty of these dark-skinned invaders.

Therefore, as the first detachment of Saracen cavalry moved forth to begin the attack, he held his breath and all his muscles grew tense with excitement.

The Franks were formed in battalions bristling with spears. They met the shock, the trampling steeds and slashing cimeters, like stone walls, and many a spearman lay in his blood, many a turbaned head went down, and all the lines encountered. It became that hand-to-hand struggle which distinguished

the warfare of the Middle Ages. No artillery smoke obscured that field, and the sun shone with a glare on short-swords that next instant steamed with red, on axes in their swift descent, and on armor that crashed aloud at the fall of its dying wearer.

During that day no man could have said what the result would be. Both sides were courageous as lions. Duke Charles led an army in whom he could trust for this occasion, though no long military discipline held them united. But the Moslem leader, Abderrahman, was handling skilled conquerors.

Towards evening, young Cedric noticed a break in the Saracen cavalry. It was told afterwards that a cry rose among them that the Christians were pillaging their camp. A detachment of Franks had fallen upon their rear. So the cavalry turned to protect the treasure in their tents, and this turned the battle of Tours. There was a panic along the Saracen lines.

Again, a cry arose that their general, Abderrahman, was slain. The rout now became general. The Franks drove the Moslems before them. Darkness closed in, leaving them masters of a field from which the Saracen power flowed back forever.

All night the faithful Gerome and his young master searched the heaps of wounded and slain for the boy's father. Horses and bodies, turbans and helmets, cimeters and spears, were mingled, and the torches of parties carrying away the wounded, cast a weird light over this field.

At dawn, before the faintest streak of sunrise, the Saracen cavalry were seen moving in the distance, and the Franks immediately followed up their victory by pursuit.

It was late in the morning that Gerome and young Cedric found their captain, half-buried under heaps of Moslem, mortally wounded, and so faint he could not speak to them until revived with water. Gerome took off the soldier's helmet, and the boy supported his father's head.

"It was well that I remained, father," he said staunchly. "Now give me the messages to carry to my mother."

"You can carry her the news of victory," said Cedric with effort.

"That I can, father—they are yet driving the Saracens. And while Gerome and I searched we heard



that all the treasure these infidels have spoiled from our land, now lies in heaps in their deserted tents: emeralds, and gold, massive silver vessels and rich stuffs."

"They have seized on their women and children, and have flown like the wind, master," said Gerome; "and their general, Abderrahman, is slain!"

A noise of shouting and trampling was heard upon the field. Directly past where the boy and servant were raising their charge upon a litter, came the Frankish duke surrounded by his officers. He reined in his horse as he recognized this old comrade, Count Cedric, but what he was about to speak was swallowed up by another shout raised on the field:

"Long live Charles Martel!"

"Martel," uttered the dying soldier, though no one caught his words but his son, who was soon to be young Count Cedric in his place; "the Hammer! he has, by the help of heaven, beaten down the infidels and broken Saracen dominion. Our Charles, the Hammer!"

Thus was this decisive trial made between the strength of the East and the West, between Chris-

tianity and Mohammedanism, exactly one century after the death of Mohammed. It was the first severe check Saracenic invasion had yet received.

While young Cedric returned with his father's body to the city of Tours, mourning, and obliged to lay that price of the victory at the feet of his mother, perhaps he remembered that with his father's armor he inherited the name of a hero who had helped to fight one of the decisive battles of the world.

COLLATERAL READING.—This battle is called by the French the Battle of Poitiers. It is treated by Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;" by Henri Martin in his History of France; by Hallam in his "Middle Ages;" and by Mrs. Marshall in her History of France. The account by Martin is very spirited. Mrs. Marshall properly calls it the Battle of Poitiers, but the Battle of Tours is its usual name.

XII.—OUT OF THE DARK.

SOME cakes burning on a cottage hearth; an angry woman and a dignified man. Such are the features of a picture that the old English chroniclers give of an event that they tell us occurred a thousand years ago. There are reasons that lead historians to think that there were no burnt cakes; but so often has the story been told that we sometimes almost think that we can smell them now!

Do you know who the man was? It was a king, of whom Professor Freeman, the English historian, who certainly knows a great deal about him, says, that "He is the most perfect character in history. He is a singular instance of a prince who has become a hero of romance, has had countless imaginary exploits and imaginary institutions attributed to him, but to whose character romance has done no more

than justice, and who appears in exactly the same light in history and in fable. No other man has ever so thoroughly united all the virtues both of the ruler and of the private man. In no other man on record were so many virtues disfigured by so little alloy. A saint without superstition, a scholar without ostentation, a warrior all whose wars were fought in the defence of his country, a conqueror whose laurels were never stained by cruelty, a prince never cast down by adversity, never lifted up by insolence in the hour of triumph — there is no other name in history to compare with his."

Can you now guess whom this is written of? It was not King Arthur of the Round Table, that wonderful hero of whom Tennyson has written such entertaining poems; nor is it King Louis, of France, whose good deeds you will read of in history; nor even the great Charlemagne, who stood so high on the rolls of fame a thousand years ago. It was none of these, but it was King Alfred, of England, who did many more good deeds than can possibly be related in a short article. In fact, I can tell you little of his deeds in general. I am to show you only how he led

his people out of the dark ; how he helped them to preserve their freedom at a time when some terrible men from the north, from the region of pirates and freebooters, were trying as hard as they could to conquer the English and take their country from them.

When you come to read Mr. Green's interesting book called "The Making of England," you will find that the man who is said to have "made" it was King Egbert, who died in the year 857. His son Ethelwolf reigned after him for a few years, and died, leaving four sons who sat on the throne, one after the other. The youngest of these was Alfred. He had been well brought up by his mother, and he probably remembered the stories that were told of the greatness of his grandfather, who had been chosen king the same year that Charlemagne was chosen emperor, and had been stimulated by the example of that great monarch. The rough men of the north had come to the country during the times of Egbert and his son, and in the time of Alfred they tried it again. They had first come only to plunder the people. They took everything that they could,

and sailed away to their own land where they were safe. After a while they began to think that it would be well to live in England. The climate was pleasanter than that of their frozen land. So they came back before Alfred's father died. Some of them did remain and settled in parts of the country, but the number of such was not very great.

While Alfred's brothers were ruling, the northerners came again, and the English were very much troubled by them. They landed and fought at Nottingham in 870. The next year Alfred himself began to fight them. He showed what sort of man he was, and the next year he was made king. For seven years he fought the invaders, with success sometimes and with disaster at others. Then, suddenly, so far as we can now find out, Alfred disappeared. The chroniclers say that he went into the woods. It was then that the event of the burning of the cakes is said to have occurred. It is a good story. It is said that the king was obliged to get shelter where he could, when he was in the woods, and that at one time he went for this purpose to the home of a cattle-herdsman who knew him. He was disguised, and sat by the great

fireplace mending his bow, when the herdsman's wife went out and left him to watch the cakes she had been cooking on the hearth. The king was thinking of affairs of state, probably, and forgot his trust. When the housewife returned, she found her cakes burned, and administered to the king a good scolding, telling him she would warrant he would be ready to eat them, though he was not willing to watch them.

The scolding words of the herdsman's wife are given thus in the speech of the inhabitants of Somersetshire, where the incident is said to have occurred :

"Ca'sn thee mind the kecks, man, an' doossen zee 'em burn?
I'm benn thee's eat 'em vast enough, az zoon az 'tiz the turn."

This story is told by a bishop, and ought to be true, but as I have said, I am not sure that it is. You will find it repeated in many books. It seems to be true, at least, that at this time the king was hidden away in the forests where the people generally did not see him, from some time in January until the twelfth of May in the year 878. It is not unlikely that he had such adventures as this, and that he mingled on

friendly terms with the rough people of the woods. He was getting ready for a great movement. He knew that the Northerners were gathering in strong array, intending to conquer the whole of his kingdom, and he was making his plans to strike a bold blow for freedom and his rights. It is said that he could not find out through others, how great the army of the invaders was and that he determined to go to the camp himself to see and be sure. "Seeing is believing," the boys say, or used to say when I was young.

It is said that the King dressed himself in the garb of a minstrel, and wandered off towards the enemy's camp. Minstrels in those days, and for ages afterwards, were very highly prized by the people, and were given many privileges. They not only sang for them, and told them stories, but they made fun for them. They performed tricks, and did other things that, in the days when there were no printed books, served to while away the time of those who had little to do, and to amuse those who were busy.

Well, the story runs, that in the guise of a minstrel, Alfred wandered off to the camp of the Northmen,

singing as he went, and was permitted to go where he pleased, until at last he was called to sing before the commander himself. This man's name was Guthrun. Thus Alfred obtained all the information he needed. It was a bold adventure, but he was a bold man.

Now the king was ready for the beginning of his great effort. He sent trusty messengers throughout the country to tell the people that their loved king was really alive and would lead them to victory or death. It must have seemed to some of them like life from the grave when they heard this message, and perhaps many could scarcely believe the news; but they showed their true spirit by promptly gathering at a place appointed. It was seven weeks after Easter, in the middle of the beautiful month of May.

Success comes not more from knowledge and determination than from skill and tact in the use of means. Alfred showed his tact in this instance by choosing, as the place of meeting, a spot which appealed to the patriotism of the people, and suggested to them the thought that their king was the true holder of the

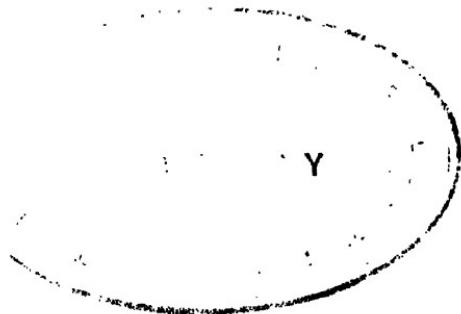
royal power. He told them to come together at a place called "Egbert's Stone," that is now shortened into "Brixton," and gives name to a place in Wiltshire. The name of this place of meeting must have stirred the hearts of the Saxons as they remembered the great Bretwalda, Egbert, the first of the kings of England, and thought that it was his grandson who now called them together. History tells us that they gathered around their king "with a rapture that cast away fear and doubt."

The third day after the gathering of the host, the shock of battle came, at a place called "Ethendune," or Edendune. The Northerners came out of their fortress to face the host that had so suddenly appeared before them, but they were met by the English with determination and were put to flight. They were slaughtered in great numbers before reaching a place of safety. Then they shut themselves up. The English came together in still larger numbers and surrounded the fortress so that no provisions could get into it. After two weeks Guthrun was obliged to give up. He was treated by King Alfred much better than he probably expected. A treaty was made

with him, under which he and all his men were allowed to remain in England on condition that they would give up their paganism and be baptised as members of the Christian Church. They were not allowed to be soldiers, but, if they would live in peace with the other inhabitants, Alfred had no objection to their remaining on the island ; in fact, I think he preferred to have them, as they would help to make a strong nation and to protect the whole body from other enemies who might arise. The ceremony of baptism was performed, and the treaty signed at Wedmore, which was a royal residence, peace was restored, and Alfred was king of all England south of the Thames, with London as his capital.

Thus the foundation of the new kingdom of England was laid. I wish I could recount for you the deeds of Alfred after this time, but they fall into another chapter of history. I was to tell you merely of the great struggle, and how it fell out. There is a book about Alfred's life by Mr. Thomas Hughes, in which I think you would be interested. A great many stories are told about him. One of Jacob Abbott's histories has Alfred for its subject, and

most people like to read what he wrote. Bishop Asser's old life of Alfred is published as one of the "Bohn" Antiquarian Library, and there is a life more thorough than any of these by a German, Dr. Pauli, which has been translated into English.



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